





3
2.6
SACHEL SERIES.

no. 21

Vic.

PRICE 30 CENTS.

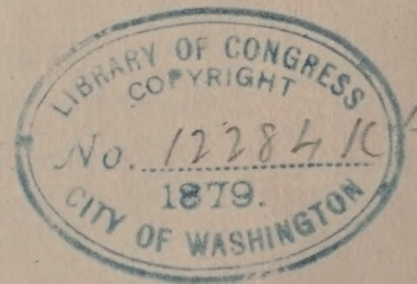
VIC.

A NOVEL.

Braham
BY

A. BENRIMO,

AUTHOR OF "THE WATERTON MYSTERY," "THE PERSONALS," "THE STOLEN
LOCKET," "CRUEL CIRCUMSTANCES," "THE PRICELESS PICTURE," "THE
BYFIELD DIVORCE CASE," "THE SINGER'S LOVE," "SECRETS OF THE
SANCTUM," ETC., ETC., ETC.



NEW YORK:
THE AUTHORS' PUBLISHING COMPANY,
BOND STREET.

[1879]

PZ 3

.B44.18V

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1879, by

A. BENRIMO,

In the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

All rights reserved.

IN LIEU OF PREFACE.

(From the New York *Evening Express*.)

"Vic" is the title of a dramatic and humorous novel (in press) by a New York journalist. One of the chief characters of the story is a certain Doctor Philander Potter Portley, a patent medicine manufacturer. It will be published in a few days by the Authors' Publishing Company, New York.

(From the New York *Star*.)

"Vic" is the title of a humorous and dramatic novel (in press), by a New York journalist. A patent medicine manufacturer—Doctor Philander Potter Portley—is one of the characters of the story. It will be published in a few days by the Authors' Publishing Company, New York.

(From the *Era*, New York.)

"Vic" is the title of a humorous and exciting novel (in press) by a well-known New York journalist. It will be published in a few days. It is described as a bright, well-told, highly dramatic story of American life, with a strong plot, witty dialogue, startling situations, rapid action, and powerful and well-delineated characters. One of the chief personages is a patent medicine manufacturer—Doctor Philander Potter Portley,—who constantly recommends, in and out of season, with and without provocation, his "Preservative Preparations," and his "Pills, Powders, Pellets and Potions." He is a type of a very prevalent individual. "Vic"—the heroine of the story—is a bold and original creation, and likewise a truly noble and lovable woman, not without a spice of fun in her composition. It will be issued by the Authors' Publishing Co., New York.

Notices similar to the above having appeared in the papers, being the usual announcement of a forthcoming novel, the following correspondence,—which explains itself,—resulted:

NEW YORK, SEPT. 8, 1879.

TO THE AUTHOR OF "VIC,"

(Care of Authors' Publishing Co., New York):

Sir:—I see that mention is made in the papers that you are the author of a work of fiction, about to be published, in which you not

only have the impudence to mention me by name, but likewise to portray me in a contemptuous and ridiculous light ;—further, that you attack my business and standing in the community. My purpose in writing to you is to warn you to desist, for you are on the brink of a libel suit. If you print my name in your book, I shall be compelled, in self-defence, to come down upon you with the terrors of the law. If you attempt to utter your revolting libels against me, a prison stares you in the face. Be warned in time. If, by your intended publication, you cast odium upon my name and bring into ridicule and discredit my Preservative Preparations, which have stood the test of thirty years, and by the manufacture and sale of which, I support myself and family, you make yourself liable for damages. I shall enjoin its publication, and have you arrested for libel. My counsel informs me, that not only can I stop the sale of the book—in its present shape—but likewise, I can bring suit against you for malicious libel. And I'll do it. Understand, sir, when I thus threaten you, I do so from a sense of prospective injury to my business and my material interests, which every man is bound to protect by all the means which the law affords.

Respectfully,

PHILANDER POTTER PORTLEY, M. D.

NEW YORK, Sept. 9, 1879.

DOCTOR PHILANDER POTTER PORTLEY :

Sir :—Many thanks for your letter of yesterday. It has solved two problems with which I have hitherto unsuccessfully coped. The problems were, whether or no, I should write a preface to "Vic," and what the preface ought to contain. I received your letter while thus undetermined. The question is settled now in the affirmative. I have concluded to print your letter in lieu of preface to "Vic," which I am happy to inform you will be published, with all possible expedition, "in its present shape."

Respectfully,

A. BENRIMO,

Author of "Vic."

CONTENTS.

BOOK I.—PHILPOT'S DETECTIVE AGENCY.

I.—BROTHER AND SISTER.....	9
II.—THE DISGUISE.....	18
III.—THE PROMISSORY NOTE.....	22
IV.—THE BARGAIN FULFILLED.....	33

BOOK II.—PORTLEY AT HOME.

I.—THE NEW NEIGHBORS.....	41
II.—THE INTRUDER	46
III.—THE WEDDING-DAY FIXED.....	50
IV.—A DESPERATE THREAT.....	55
V.—VIC MAKES A STARTLING DISCLOSURE	59
VI.—THE PROMISSORY NOTE AGAIN.....	69
VII.—JENNY COMPLAINS OF THE KEY-HOLE.....	79
VIII.—ST. JOHN DRAWS A CONCLUSION.....	84
IX.—BEHIND THE WINDOW-CURTAINS.....	90
X.—VIC'S HEROIC DEED.....	99

BOOK III.—IN VIC'S HOUSE.

I.—ST. JOHN MAKES A DISCOVERY.....	107
II.—PORTLEY'S SUSPICIONS AROUSED.....	114
III.—PORTLEY MAKES AN ARREST.....	119
IV.—A REVELATION.....	127
V.—THE MOCK-MARRIAGE PROPOSAL....	132
VI.—THE MAN THAT WILL ALWAYS DO HIS DUTY.....	137
VII.—PORTLEY'S MISSION	144

STANDARD

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE is a book which contains a collection of the best and most interesting stories, poems, and plays ever written. It is a book which is suitable for use in the classroom, and is also a book which is suitable for use in the home.

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE is a book which contains a collection of the best and most interesting stories, poems, and plays ever written. It is a book which is suitable for use in the classroom, and is also a book which is suitable for use in the home.

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE is a book which contains a collection of the best and most interesting stories, poems, and plays ever written. It is a book which is suitable for use in the classroom, and is also a book which is suitable for use in the home.

BOOK I.
PHILPOT'S DETECTIVE AGENCY.

VIC.

BOOK I.—PHILPOT'S DETECTIVE AGENCY.

I.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

THE twenty-fourth of March, 1879, was a clear day, but cold for the season.

Philpot's Detective Agency was situated on the second story of a huge marble front building in Broadway near Trinity Church. About ten o'clock in the morning of the day above named, a young man sat before the fire in the outer office reserved for callers. He was alone. He had a newspaper in his lap; and leaning lazily back in his chair, he leizurely smoked a cigar.

The room is rather small, and its two windows look out upon Broadway, with its surging sea of countless vehicles. A desk, with chairs on either side, stands endwise against one of the windows. A lounge stretches across in front of the other. Opposite the fireplace is the entrance-door from the hallway. A large, square sign fills the mantel space. It is in gilt letters on a black ground to the following

effect: "Detectives furnished. All branches. Private inquiry in all the great cities of the world, a specialty."

Facing the desk is a door that opens into a private room. On the right of this door is a little window cut in the wall, and looking into the outer office. A few engravings hang on the walls of the latter. The floor is carpeted.

The young man sitting at the fire is probably about twenty; tall, pale, and rather dissipated in appearance, yet decidedly handsome. He gave a stretch, yawned, sunk back in his chair, and planting his feet on the edge of the mantel-piece, took the cigar out of his mouth and slowly emitted a cloud of smoke.

"Well, I've been here a week on trial," he spoke to himself, half aloud, "and I must say I like the business immensely. So far I've had nothing particular to do, and thanks to my great natural abilities and my enormous industry, I have performed the task to my own and my employer's satisfaction. How pleasant it is when employer and employed are in such perfect accord! Who says labor and capital can't agree? The very first thing that old Philpot said when he engaged me was, 'Now, Gil, you just snook around the place and get the run of things,' and by Jove, after a week's snooking around and getting the run, I rather think I like it."

His reflections were disturbed by the noise of some one in the hall trying the handle of the door. He jumped up with amazing alacrity, put his cigar down on the desk, at which he sat, and wrote in a memorandum book with a pencil that had no point.

A boy in navy blue came in, wearing a cap which bore

the legend, "DISTRICT TELEGRAPH MESSENGER." He had a book in one hand, and in the other, a sealed envelope. He read the superscription as he entered.

"Gilbert Fernandez. Philpot's Detective Agency."

"That's me, young fellow. Fetch it over, and look sharp, too. I'm driven to death, you see."

Thus admonished by the intently busied young gentleman at the desk, the messenger boy hurried across the room, handed him the telegram and book, which latter he receipted and gave back.

The boy's keen eyes are fastened on the cigar stump projecting from the edge of the desk with the lighted end outward.

"Say, mister, can I have that butt?"

"Take it, sonny, and be happy. It's a stinkadora," replied its owner, as he tears open the telegram.

"Thank you, sir," returns the boy, as he pounces on the much-coveted prize, puts it into his mouth, draws hard, and exits, leaving the door ajar.

Mr. Gilbert Fernandez read the telegram hastily. It ran as follows:

"Taken suddenly ill. Unable to leave the house. You'll be alone for at least three hours. After that two or three of our people will be in to report. Enter their reports. If any 'biz' comes in, take it and look sharp. Come to my house in the evening. PHILPOT."

"And so," mused he, "I'm monarch of all I survey for three mortal hours."

He resumed his favorite posture before the fire—namely, sitting back in his chair, with his feet perched on the edge

of the mantel, in which position he lounged, glancing over the newspaper.

"Well, I do wish somebody would bring in a big case," thus he reflected. "Say a great bank robbery, or an enormous bond swindle. I'd just show old Philpot that he could safely trust me with confidential 'biz.' I'd just ferret out the whole thing in a jiffy. I'd know by instinct who were the guilty parties, where they had secreted the swag, and I'd have all my plans ready to nab 'em, and, by Jove, I'd have the 'stuff,' and the men in quod by the time I went up to old Philpot's this evening. I'd show 'em what Gil Fernandez could do."

Now he began to stretch and yawn. His eye caught a heading in the newspaper, which he read as follows, between gapes, "'Great Bobbery in a Bank.' O, no; pshaw! 'Great Robbery in a Bank!' That's it. Well, it's much the same thing. Our folks are in that affair." And here he gave a prolonged yawn and a great stretch. "And we're on their track;" now he nodded and his eyes dulled, "their track." Here he shook himself, exclaiming: "Damn it! How deuced drowsy I am? That lager! Up too late last night, Gil, my boy, and that lager." Now he nods deeper and his eyes slowly close. "We're on their track; —track of the—lager—la——"

The second syllable of the popular beverage is forever lost in a guttural snore as Mr. Gilbert Fernandez falls into a doze.

At this moment the office door was slowly pushed open, and a tall, dark, beautiful woman, richly and tastefully attired in a walking suit, stood on the threshold and looked

in somewhat timidly, and then entered with a hesitating step. Apparently she did not notice the sleeper, whose back was towards her. She looked around with curiosity, evidently surprised at seeing no one.

The fair stranger was specially noticeable for her shapely and commanding figure, which was finely rounded and well-proportioned. She carried herself with the most charming grace and ease, while her dignity and stateliness were derived, in part, from her stature, which was much above the medium height. She was a brunette, with a bewitching countenance of superb and queenly beauty; great black eyes; full curved lips, red as coral; a tinge of color on her lovely cheeks; and a firm, bold chin finely moulded. A glance at her fascinating face gave you an insight into her character: impulse, enthusiasm, fire; wrapped up in and given over to her idol; ever noble, true, sincere, and devoted; a keen, bright, quick intellect.

"I'm in the right office? Yes, that's the sign." She glanced at the lettering on the door. "What a queer place! There seems to be no one here!" And now for the first time she saw the young gentleman who had been overcome by drowsiness. "Oh, here's somebody! Why, he's asleep. I'll just take a peep at him—only one—to see what he looks like."

She stealthily approached the sleeper, and looked into his face. She started back with a half-suppressed scream.

"It's my brother Gil!" she exclaimed, in surprise. "He here? What shall I do?" She turned irresolutely towards the door, took a few steps and stopped in an attitude of thought.

Gil was on his feet in an instant, rubbing his eyes.

"I could have sworn I heard a woman scream," he said to himself. "I do believe I've been napping. Pretty detective I am."

He now perceived the lady's presence.

"Ah! Excuse me, madam. Take a chair—Gracious goodness me," he broke out. "Vic! Vic! Can I believe my eyes, or am I dreaming?"

"Yes, dear Gil," she returned, as she shook him warmly by the hand and gave him her cheek to kiss. "It's me. I was quite as much astonished to see you here as you are to see me. Tell me how you came here?"

"No, Vic, *you* tell *me*, how you come to be so unexpectedly in New York, and why you are in this office? When did you leave San Francisco?"

"A week ago, yesterday, Gil. I arrived here direct from San Francisco yesterday morning."

"Well, come, sit down by the fire and tell me all the news from home," said Gil, as he placed chairs. "Father and mother and all the folks well?"

"All very well, Gil. You look splendid, and you've grown quite a man."

With a sweet smile she patted his cheek in sisterly fondness. He was her pet brother. She was a couple of years his senior, being just turned twenty-two. Gil was delighted with her affectionate manifestations. He loved her dearly, and he thought he never saw her look so beautiful.

"Sis, dear, I'm not feeling first class this morning. Fact is, I was on a kind of tear last night with some fellows, and I didn't get enough sleep. Come, sit down. I'm so anxious to hear why you left 'Frisco."

They now sat by the fire within easy talking distance. Vic began :

"Gil, I have been most shamefully ill-used ; and by a man, too, whom I still love, love passionately. Three months ago I engaged myself to a Mr. Mortimer St. John, a gentleman of wealth and standing in San Francisco. I met him at the rooms of a private theatrical society, of which we were both members. He became fascinated with my acting. I must tell you I have achieved great social celebrity as an amateur actress, for I was the star in almost every piece. Our histrionic triumphs were the talk of the town, and almost rivalled the regular performers. Well, suffice it to say that Mr. St. John and myself fell desperately in love. We agreed to keep our engagement a profound secret. We intended one day taking everybody by surprise by going off and getting married. I thought it would be such fun to return to town in the character—real, not assumed,—of Mrs. Mortimer St. John, the rich broker's wife, especially as I knew his family, as well as mine, would be delighted with the match. One day I received a letter from him that plunged me into grief. The substance of this letter was in these words: 'Vic, the truth is this: I have lost everything in stocks—mining stocks. I am ruined. I love you too well to make you a life-partner in my poverty and misfortune. Release me and let us part as friends.'"

"There was more, much more," she resumed, after a moment's pause, during which she had slipped her gloved hand into the pocket of her sealskin sacque and drew forth a cambric pocket-handkerchief with which she dried her tearful

eyes, while Gil looked at her with deep sympathy and rapt attention.

"Gil, I was stung to the quick and overwhelmed with sudden misery. I loved him, and love him yet, with passionate devotion. I answered him, saying all was not yet lost; that we had youth and hope; that I would wait until he had rebuilt his shattered fortunes. But before I posted this letter to him, I learned by chance that he had gone East. A mutual friend to whom he had indiscreetly communicated his plans, informed me that St. John had scraped together all the money he could get, had procured the strongest letters of introduction, and had gone to New York with the intention of representing himself as a wealthy stock-operator, and marry a rich wife. That was the way he was going to retrieve his fallen fortunes. My Spanish blood was roused. The pangs of jealousy pierced my breast. I made a solemn vow to thwart his designs by every means in my power. I took into my confidence our rich and eccentric aunt—dear, darling aunt Dolores. I confessed all to her. She sympathized with me, furthered all my plans. You know I was always her favorite. Under pretext that my health required a change of scene, she got father's and mother's consent to take me to New York for a trip. You know that aunt Dolores can do pretty much as she likes with father and mother; so much for being a rich aunt. And so here we are!"

"Well, well, well!" escaped from Gil's lips in astonished accents. "Dear aunt Dolores here too!"

"I saw this detective agency advertised," continued Vic, "and my purpose in coming here was to employ a detec-

tive to follow up Mortimer—I don't know yet where he's to be found—and keep me advised of his doings. I little dreamed I should meet you at this place. How does it happen that you are in this office. Are you an employé?"

"Yes," returned Gil. "I had been idle for some time—couldn't get a situation to suit me. This offered and I thought I'd try it."

They were silent for some moments, during which Vic seemed preoccupied in thought, as though revolving in her mind many devices.

"And where's aunt Dolores?" asked Gil.

"She's at the hotel where we are staying. She was too unwell after the long journey to go out to-day, so I resolved to sally forth alone in quest of information. But you seem to be all alone here?"

"I am and shall be for three hours."

"Gil," said Vic, meditating, "you may, perhaps, in your position, be of great service to me."

"And you may depend upon me, Vic."

A man's step was heard outside the door in the hall.

"Some one's coming in here, Vic. Perhaps you had better go into this private office until I see who it is."

As he spoke he opened the door of the inner room into which Vic followed him. The folding shutters of the little window in the wall beside the door were slightly parted. Gil left Vic in this room, closed the door, and returned to the outer office.

II.

THE DISGUISE.

"Well, I guess this is 'biz' at last," thought Gil, as he approached a tall, blonde, fine-looking gentleman in an ulster, who had entered the outer office, and now stood, with his hat in his gloved hand, near the fire. He was about thirty, of easy, graceful manners and noble presence.

"Good morning, sir. What can I do for you?" Gil inquired.

"Is Mr. Philpot in?" asked the gentleman.

His voice was soft and penetrating. Gil's eye caught an indistinct view of Vic's face through the slightly parted shutters of the little window. She was looking and listening—evidently with an intensity that was to him unaccountable.

"No, sir," replied Gil; "but I can attend to any office business. Is it a bank robbery, a forgery, or an inquiry?"

"It's an inquiry. I want to ascertain whether a certain person has arrived in New York. You do that?"

"Certainly," rejoined Gil, "if you furnish us with the requisite information."

Again he saw Vic approach the little window, and look and listen in statuesque immobility. Had he not known that she was there, he would not have been able to recognize her. The opening was too small.

"What information would you require?" queried the gentleman.

"The person's name and description, and where, if you know, he last came from."

"Well, it isn't a he; it's a she," returned the gentleman, with a little laugh.

"Will you please sit down?" The gentleman sat near Gil's desk, at which Gil was now seated. The latter took pencil and paper, and asked:

"What's the lady's name?"

"Miss Victoria Fernandez, of San Francisco," replied the gentleman.

Gil's jaw fell in amazement. But he had presence of mind enough to write the name, thus hoping his astonishment would pass unnoticed.

The gentleman continued:

"I received a telegram from a friend of mine in San Francisco saying that this lady had disappeared. Now, it's important for me to know whether she has come to New York."

He stopped and looked at Gil.

"Will you excuse me for a few moments, sir," said Gil, who had come to a certain conclusion. "I want to step into the next room and state your matter to a person who is very well posted in this particular branch of the business. I shall then know better how to advise you. Here is the paper. I won't be gone long."

Handing him the newspaper, which he took and began to read, Gil hurried into the inner room where Vic was, closing the door.

He found her in an excited state, but forcing herself to be composed.

"That's your Mortimer St. John?" said Gil to her, interrogatively, in a low voice.

"Yes. Strange that he should come here to inquire about me!" She walked up and down in great agitation, apparently thinking intently.

"O, Gil, I should so like to know what he's up to?"

Suddenly she stopped in front of a desk that was placed before the little window that looked into the outer office. She gave the green-covered top a smart tap with her tiny glove-encased fingers, and exclaimed:

"I have it, Gil," as she examined the desk with great care. It was furnished with a portfolio, inkstand, and pens.

The desk was one of those kind enclosed on all sides with solid wood, except in the centre, where the person sits. Here there is a small opening for the feet and legs.

"What have you got?" asked Gil.

Without paying any attention to his question, Vic asked him, in rapid tones, her beautiful face alive and glowing, and her large, black eyes gleaming and dancing with excitement:

"Have you any false beards and wigs here, Gil?"

A daring thought had entered Vic's fertile brain.

"O, yes," answered Gil; "we have plenty of false beards and wigs. Have to use them often. But why?"

Here he opened a cupboard and took out a number of the articles named, and put them on the desk.

"Is Philpot an old man?" questioned Vic in the same intense manner.

"Yes," Gil replied; "a little old man with a gray beard."

"Pick out a wig and beard as near like his as possible," calmly ordered Vic, as she removed her hat.

Gil seized from among those that were on the desk, a wig and a beard, and holding up one in each hand, said:

"They are his to a hair. But what are you going to do, Vic?"

Vic's quick glance caught sight of a long, dark, old-fashioned coat hanging from a nail on the wall. Pointing to it, she demanded:

"Is that Philpot's coat?"

"Yes," said Gil, "this is his office coat," taking it down. "It seems to have been made in the year 1. For heaven's sake, tell me what you are driving at, Vic?"

"Don't oppose me—don't say a word, Gil. You know you said I could depend upon you. I vow I'll know why he comes to inquire about me. Perhaps I can find out all his designs."

As she spoke, off came her sacque, which she flung into the cupboard with her hat. Then drawing off her gloves, and turning one in the other, she sent them flying into the same receptacle. She hastily took down her hair—jet black and very abundant—which she wore in a stately crown, and put it up again so that it lay flat on her shapely head. Her nimble fingers wrought the change with marvellous quickness. Then she said:

"Give me the coat, Gil. I'm used to this sort of thing, you know—that is, dressing for a part." She put the coat on. It reached almost to her feet. Buttoning it up nearly to the throat, and allowing only her white cravat and collar

to be seen, she sat down at the desk, close into the opening already described, so that her skirts were wholly hidden. She slipped off her rings and ear-rings and put them into her pocket.

"This desk, shut up on all sides, is just suited to my purpose, Gil," she cried, exultantly. "See, my dress is entirely concealed."

And as she looked down on to the sides of her chair, she laughed merrily a low musical laugh. Gil began to fathom her scheme.

"Give me the beard and wig."

Gil gave her those that he had selected, and put away the others. She put on the wig first and then the beard, by aid of a hand-glass which Gil held before her. They fitted to a nicety.

"Mortimer!"—she addressed the door—"you shall tell me all I wish to know before you leave this place."

"Here are the old man's blue glasses," said Gil, opening a drawer and taking out a pair of blue spectacles. "Perhaps——"

"Just the thing," said Vic, eagerly seizing them. "I was afraid he might recognize me by the expression of my eyes." And she put them on, looked in the hand-glass, and had a good laugh, in which Gil joined.

"And here's something to alter the voice," said Gil, taking from a drawer a package of peculiarly shaped pebbles. "You put them in your mouth one on each side like a double-breasted quid of tobacco."

Vic took the pebbles, which were small and smooth, and resembled birds' eggs; she smelt them and drew back in disgust.

"Look here, Gil. Anybody ever used these things?"

"O, no. They've never been touched since they were picked up on Manhattan Beach."

Vic put them in her mouth as directed.

"And now, Gil, ring up the curtain—that is, bring in Mr. Mortimer St. John. Tell him Mr. Philpot will see him personally. Of course I am your respected employer. Show him in."

Gil inspected her, and amid bursts of laughter, averred that she was an exact representation of the head of the Detective Agency. He composed his features and went into the office where St. John was sitting reading the newspaper, in unsuspecting quietude.

III.

THE PROMISSORY NOTE.

VIC was a natural-born actress. Art had improved her talents and practice had perfected her gifts. She was finely educated; had a trenchant wit; a strong relish for the humorous; an inexhaustible fund of animal spirits; bounding and boundless health; and a perfect and powerful physique. Among her greatest social successes as an amateur actress, those were preëminent in which the element of disguise had entered. In disguises and "make up" she was thoroughly at home, and enjoyed the fun immensely when her intimates

declared they were completely deceived and unable to recognize her in her character parts. Hence the confidence with which she had assumed the rôle of old Philpot, the detective.

"Please walk right in," said Gil, as he and St. John appeared at the door.

"Take a seat here," said Vic, in an old man's squeak, which effectually disguised her voice. She did not like to depend too much upon the pebbles. She motioned him to a seat beside her.

"What a curious old fossil," thought St. John, as he sat down; "but I daresay he's a deep one."

"I always tell my clerk," began Vic, speaking as before, "to say I'm not in, until I learn what's wanted."

"That's all right, sir," acquiesced St. John.

"He has partly told me your case," resumed Vic, with a well-assumed asthmatic cough interrupting her squeak. Turning to Gil—"Please remain outside."

Gil went into the adjoining room, knowing that Vic's order was intended to impress St. John's mind with the conviction that he was conversing with Mr. Philpot.

"The case presents no difficulty whatever, provided you give us correct information. It is said that lawyers and doctors must know the truth. This applies with still greater force to detectives. You'll excuse me, then, if I question you a little closely." Thus Vic. "Everything with us is strictly confidential," she added.

"Of course, of course, sir," rejoined St. John. "I'm quite ready to answer your questions."

"This lady—is she related to you?" queried Vic.

"No, sir. Though we came mighty near being very closely connected," laughed St. John, twisting his golden-hued mustache. He had removed his gloves, and now threw them into his hat, which was on the desk.

"Ah!" returned Vic. "I understand. Engaged to be married?"

"Yes," said St. John, with a look of surprised admiration on his handsome countenance, as though he thought his questioner was as quick as a flash.

"And now, probably," pursued Vic, still in the same treble tone of inquiry, "you think of marrying some one else, and you want to know if she has come to New York with intent to interfere with you?"

"Exactly, sir," answered St. John. "You've hit the nail right on the head."

"It wouldn't be so pleasant," said Vic, in a malicious squeal, "to be served with papers—he! he!—in a breach of promise suit—eh? say the day or the very evening of your engagement to some rich and beautiful belle, eh? and perhaps, in the house, too, of your future father-in-law—he! he! before a room full of company, eh?"

"Why, sir," protested St. John, "the very thought makes my blood run cold."

"Now, what I propose to do in your case," she went on, "would be something like this: decoy her to some other city by making her believe you are there, and so keep her away until you are married to number two. Money there, I suppose, eh?"

"Piles, stacks, heaps," enthusiastically rejoined St. John. "Your idea's a splendid one. What will be your charge, Mr. Philpot?"

"Well, give me your check for fifty dollars dated ten days ahead," answered Vic. "If I don't do anything for you, you needn't pay it. The first thing will be to find out whether or no she is in New York."

"Precisely," replied St. John, as he took a blank check from his pocket, filled it out, and handed it to Vic.

"Please write your name and address on this paper," said Vic, as she opened the portfolio and gave him a sheet of note paper. He complied, and returned her the pen and paper.

"And now," requested Vic, "this young lady's name and description?"

She put pen to paper.

"Victoria Fernandez."

She writes.

"That's a Spanish name," remarked Vic.

"She's of Spanish descent," explains St. John. "Her ancestors were among the old Spanish settlers of California."

"You know they are a bloodthirsty and revengeful lot," squeaked Vic, "especially the women. Is she handsome, ugly, or just plain?"

"Handsome!" exclaimed St. John, warmly. "She's perfectly beautiful."

"Dark, bright eyes, I suppose, eh?" queried Vic, writing.

"Yes, indeed," St. John said, kindling. "Grand black eyes, full of fire, and mischief, and passion."

"Tall?" pursued Vic, writing.

"Quite tall, with superbly rounded form, somewhat slender,—and the grace and dignity of a queen. A perfect Venus—a model for a sculptor."

St. John had grown quite enthusiastic as he proceeded with his glowing description. Vic felt a gush of pleasure as she listened to the catalogue of her personal charms. It must be confessed—she was vain of her beauty. She remembered that St. John had seen her play *Rosalind* in “As You Like It,” whence was derived his description of her figure, the allusion to which caused the blood to rush to her face. The bushy gray beard and mustache, and blue glasses effectually hid her blushes.

“And you were engaged to the beautiful creature you have described?” remarked Vic, casually, as she paused in writing. “What a pity!—excuse the observation, sir—but what a pity she gave you up.”

“I did not say she gave me up,” excitedly replied St. John, bridling. “What right——”

“Why, you don’t mean to say you gave *her* up?” inquired Vic.

“Yes, I do,” answered St. John. “I have no faith whatever, notwithstanding the poets to the contrary, in love, pure and simple, as an all-sufficient sustenance for the physical constitution. My circumstances undergoing a change whereby I was debarred from giving her a home such as I desired for her, and such as she merited, I broke off the engagement because I loved her too well to take her from her father’s house, where she enjoyed a reasonable degree of comfort and independence, and subject her to pinching poverty with all its painful cares and uncertainties, accustomed as she was to the instant gratification of every wish.”

“And now,” said Vic, after a little pause, to recover her self-possession; she had listened to this speech with a rising

sensation in the throat. "And now, as you can't marry for love"—she waited, fearful lest her voice would betray her; but with a strong effort she continued in the same old man's squeak—"you are going to marry for money. Is that it?"

"That's it, sir," was St. John's reply. "You see, I take a practical view of things. As a man of the world, you will agree with me."

"But, women, you are aware, look at these things so differently," observed Vic, trying to speak with judicial calmness. "When a woman loves, her whole heart and soul and mind are interpenetrated with both the object of her adoration and the fascinating and delicious influence of the idolizing sentiment. With her it is a life-long worship, ever growing, and becoming more and more intense, ever strengthening and taking deeper root, and ceasing only with death."

"Those are exactly the ideas of this young lady." St. John spoke with some surprise in his bright blue eyes. "I own they have a certain exquisite charm about them to which I came near yielding—cold-blooded as I am. You know woman's heart, sir, that's clear."

"Ah! I have had occasion to know it," answered Vic. "However, we now understand one another. I will set my men to work at once, both here and in San Francisco, and as soon as I have any definite information I will communicate with you immediately."

St. John rose to take his leave. In reaching for his hat, he looked through the partly open shutters of the little window opening into the outer office. He drew back with an exclamation of mingled surprise and alarm.

"What's the matter?" asked Vic, with a flutter at her heart, and almost thrown off her guard, for she was fearful St. John had seen something that discovered to him her identity. But his answer reassured her on that score while disclosing a new source of interest and excitement.

"Do you see that old gentleman?" said St. John, pointing through the window to an elderly man of striking appearance, who just then entered the office and was in conversation with Gil.

Vic nodded affirmatively.

"Well, that's Doctor Portley, the father of the very young lady whom I want to marry."

Vic became intensely interested.

"I wonder what he wants here?" pursued St. John. "Can he have come to inquire about me?"

Vic was non-plussed. What should she do? She watched Gil and the new comer talking. Gil finally asked him to take a seat, gave him the newspaper, then sat down and dashed off a few lines on a sheet of paper, with which he came in, and handing it to her, said, "Gentleman wants to see you, sir."

Vic read what Gil had written, which was as follows:

"This queer old cove wants to make some inquiry about MORTIMER ST. JOHN!!! Well, I never—What shall I do?"

Vic wrote at the bottom of this note, these words:

"Detain him. Tell him Mr. Philpot will see him presently." And then gave it back to Gil, who read it and left the room.

St. John had watched these proceedings very narrowly, having resumed his seat.

"You are correct in your surmise," said Vic, now determined upon a plan of action. "Doctor Portley *does* want to inquire about you. Now, what can I do for you? If you make it worth my while——"

"Do you want to make five thousand dollars, Mr. Philpot?" queried St. John.

"Did you ever hear the question propounded, regarding a certain fowl addicted to ponds, as to its capability to swim?" asked Vic. "Did you ever know a man in this business, or any other, who did not want to make the sum you name? But how can I make it?"

"By telling him that I'm a wealthy stock-operator, and otherwise rich. In case the old gentleman should feel shaky about stocks——"

"They *are* a little risky," quietly interposed Vic.

"Throw in a couple of sheep ranches in the most fertile parts of California, each ranche containing about twenty thousand acres apiece, with a hundred thousand sheep or so. That's something solid."

"I'll agree to do it. But how about my pay?" said Vic.

"I'll give you my note for the amount," was St. John's reply.

"What is your note worth?"

"Nothing, now."

"When will it be worth anything, Mr. St. John?"

"After my marriage to Miss Rose Portley."

Vic handed him a pen dipped in ink, and a clean sheet of paper, saying, "Then write as I dictate."

St. John took the pen and paper and wrote as follows, after Vic's dictation:

"I, Mortimer St. John, of San Francisco, promise to pay to bearer for services rendered, the sum of five thousand dollars. This note to be due and payable thirty days after my marriage to Miss Rose Portley, of this city. New York, March 24, 1879."

Here St. John threw down the pen with an oath.

"I can't sign that."

"You mean to pay the money, don't you?" quietly asked Vic.

"Of course I do," replied St. John.

"Then you *must* sign it," was the firm response, issuing from that mass of gray beard, in the same piping treble, a trifle shriller now. "You must give me the only security you can—your fears of exposure. When you come with the money and take it up, you will then receive back the note, and you can then destroy it. The transaction will forever remain a secret between us. Both our ends will be attained. You will marry an heiress, and I shall pocket a small fee for helping you in the business. All I want is security that I shall receive my money honestly earned. If you refuse——"

"Well, what then?" said St. John, paling and beginning to weaken.

"Then, Mr. St. John, I shall be under the moral obligation to tell Doctor Portley the truth about you—that you are a penniless adventurer. I've no doubt I can make as good a bargain with him; he'll pay that sum for the information. Don't stand in your own light. Besides, if you give me this note, is it not to my interest to help along your marriage by every means in my power?"

"Yes, of course it is," replied St. John, taking up the pen with great reluctance. Vic inwardly marked his repugnance to the deed, and put it down to his credit. She concluded that he yielded to his fears of exposure, and not to a desire to do a base and dishonorable act. She was equally resolved to make him sign the note. It was sweet to triumph over his will, while she thought she could make good use of the document thus wrung from him.

"Well, then, sign the note and leave the rest to me, Mr. St. John."

"Here goes. I hope it will be for the best," said St. John, as he affixed his sign-manual to the paper, with a dash and a splutter.

Vic took the document, carefully blotted it, folded it up, and securely put it away in one of the capacious pockets of the coat she wore.

"And now, if we can put you somewhere in hiding, you shall be an ear-witness to the performance of my part of the bargain."

She struck a gong-bell that was on the desk. Gil came in. She beckoned to him to approach closer, and whispered to him what she desired to do.

Gil looked around thoughtfully, then went to one corner of the room and pulled out a screen that was built in the wall and ran upon rollers. It was made of heavy paper on frames, but colored to resemble black walnut wood. Running across from wall to wall, about two feet from the corner, it formed a sort of closet, amply large enough for a person to stand or sit concealed behind it. Outwardly it had the appearance of a wardrobe.

“There, you can get behind that screen,” said Vic, “and you can hear everything.”

“Good,” replied St. John, as he went to his hiding-place, and Gil, not a little bewildered at all that was going on, closed him in. “Don’t forget the ranches and the sheep.”

“Gil, show that gentleman in,” ordered Vic.

“That queer old party?” asked Gil, pointing to the outer office.

Vic nodded, and raised a warning finger to him as he disappeared, his face wearing a puzzled expression.

IV.

THE BARGAIN FULFILLED.

“WILL you please walk into Mr. Philpot’s private office, sir,” said Gil to the important looking personage who was impatiently awaiting an audience.

He rose from the chair, and threw down on the desk the paper which he had been reading. He was a man of medium height, upwards of sixty, and inclined to corpulency. His face was fat and of a uniform redness—the redness that is the product of rich and abundant food diluted with heavy wines; the redness that is beefy and full-blooded, and comes from habitual indulgence in the luxuries of the table. White mustaches, carefully combed, met on either side of his mouth mutton-chop whiskers of equal whiteness, brushed smoothly forward. His top head was a shiny ball,

the sides of which were covered with a thick growth of white hair that joined his silvery whiskers. He wore a pair of silver-rimmed eye-glasses. His apparel was black broad-cloth of a clerical cut. Indeed, a general air of oily saintliness pervaded, and, as it were, exuded from his personality.

"Ah! at last," he said in reply to Gil's invitation. His voice was a fine, full baritone, with the round, strong, chest tones well developed. He took his glasses from his nose, and holding them between his thumb and forefinger, pointed inquiringly at the door of the private office.

"Yes, sir; in there," Gil thus answers his mute question. And he marched in with a dignified tread, and the bearing of a man who was inwardly convinced that he was of no mean consequence in the economy of the universe.

"Excuse my rising," said Vic. "Whom have I the honor of addressing?"

"Allow me, sir, to introduce myself," he replied. "Mr. Philpot," waving his hand towards Vic, "Doctor Philander Potter Portley"—placing his hand on his chest. "Doctor Philander Potter Portley"—bowing and tapping himself lightly on the shoulder, "Mr. Philpot"—again waving his hand towards Vic, who could scarcely repress a smile. She bowed her acknowledgments. Doctor Portley then threw out his chest, standing a short distance from Vic, fixed his eye-glasses on his nose, and addressed her as follows in the manner of set speech, rolling his voice rhetorically in all the fullness of his strong, orotund tones:

"Let me add, Mr. Philpot, by way of *Nota Bene*, that even thirty years ago in the purer and better days of the Republic, sir, I was not an unimportant personage. This is

but the truth—the solemn truth of history. For Doctor Philander Potter Portley's Preservative Pills, Powders, Pellets and Potions for the unconditional reconstruction and immediate restoration of the lost and wasted energies, and the vital powers generally, began to play a leading part in the purer and better days of our national annals, and are to-day a recognized and necessary institution of the great West. Nay, Portley's Preservative Preparations are, at this very day and hour, the great backbone of the country—for is not the West the country, sir?—upholding and infusing vigor, force and efficacy into every branch of human industry. For the more power you give a man, the more he can do, can't he? It's something, sir, to reflect that by your poor, weak efforts for diseased humanity—for fallen man, you have been the means, under providence, of staying the great onward and triumphant march of physical degeneracy. Nay, not only staying its great onward and triumphant march, but turning back the dreadful tide, bearing numberless woes and evils in its train, and substituting in its stead the unconditional reconstruction and immediate restoration of the lost and wasted energies, and the vital powers generally. That's just what Portley's Preservative Pills, Powders, Pellets and Potions have done and are doing at this very day and hour. Therefore, I say to you, sir—from purely philanthropic motives—and through you to your sons and grandsons, to your daughters and granddaughters, and their progeny; to your nephews and nieces and their beloved offspring; to your cousins, sisters and your aunts, and their cousins, sisters and their aunts, to the third and fourth generation—never, under no circumstances,

never, I say, be without a box of Portley's Preservative Preparations. For sale, with printed directions, in all the drug stores and corner groceries in the United States, also in Canada, Great Britain, France and Germany. Price, twenty-five cents a box. Six boxes for a dollar. But enough. To business. I desire to have some inquiries made regarding the financial *status* of a gentleman lately arrived from San Francisco."

"Indeed!" said Vic, who had been impatiently waiting for him to get through his long harangue, which she saw at once was in the nature of an advertisement to his patent medicines. "I have myself only just come from San Francisco. I know pretty much everybody there. What's his name?"

"Mortimer St. John——"

"Not another word is needed, sir," quickly interrupted Vic. "I know him personally, and know him well. I can give you all the information you require without moving from this chair."

"Now really!" Portley replied. "Can you? Has he got the rocks? The spones? The sugar? In a word, the shekels? And how many of them?"

"He's a very wealthy stock operator. He owns, besides, two or three enormous sheep ranches of about thirty or forty, or fifty thousand acres apiece with hundreds of thousands of sheep. O, he's immensely rich." Thus Vic.

"That's all I want to know," rejoined Portley, with a smile of satisfaction. "Send me your bill. Your information agrees precisely with his own account, only he was devilish modest and understated his wealth. Allow me to

inform you, Mr. Philpot, that Mr. St. John has been paying his addresses to my daughter. I also will improve this occasion to likewise inform you, that Mr. Mortimer St. John is the future son-in-law of the patentee and proprietor of Portley's Preservative Preparations."

St. John, in his concealment, could scarcely refrain from giving vent to an exclamation of delight when he heard this emphatic declaration.

"I heartily congratulate you, Doctor," remarked Vic. After some unimportant conversation, the doctor took his departure.

St. John was profuse in his gratitude, when Gil led him from his place of concealment, and he found himself again face to face with Vic. He vowed that he would pay the promissory note before it was due—in fact, the moment that he could lay his hands on any funds, after his marriage to Rose Portley. He went away in the very best of spirits, first admonishing Vic to keep a sharp lookout for Miss Victoria Fernandez, who, he said, must on no account learn of his approaching marriage, or, if she should hear of it, she must be decoyed from the city.

A half an hour afterwards, Vic issued forth, having resumed her own apparel, her veil muffling her face, and made her way to her hotel, quite as much delighted with her visit to Philpot's Detective Agency, as Mr. Mortimer St. John and Doctor Philander Potter Portley were elated with theirs.

BOOK II.
PORTLEY AT HOME.

BOOK II.—PORTLEY AT HOME.

I.

THE NEW NEIGHBORS.

DOCTOR PORTLEY occupied a four story brown stone house in Forty-second street, near the Fifth Avenue. It was furnished in sumptuous style; the parlors especially were decorated and fitted up in almost oriental magnificence. As you entered the parlors from the tessalated hall you looked towards the rear of the dwelling into the extension-room, through a vista of saloon, with arches on either side supported by marble pillars. Frescoed ceilings and painted walls, on which hung large, costly oil-paintings in gilt frames, first attracted the eye; pieces of marble statuary on pedestals stood at regular distances beneath the arches; brilliant glass chandeliers of enormous dimensions depended from the ceiling; a thick, richly-hued moquet carpet covered the floor; gilt chairs, settees, sofas and arm-chairs, tufted and upholstered in rose-pink satin, with black velvet puffings and ebony frames, were gracefully disposed in their appropriate places, and rose-pink satin damask curtains, with white lace lambrequins draped the tall French windows.

The back parlor excelled, if possible, the front saloon in its furniture and fittings, though it followed the same general style,—rose-pink furniture in ebony and gilt,—as one

opened into the other through large sliding-doors of solid French walnut.

The rear apartment was used as a sitting-room on ordinary occasions, and for the reception of visitors, the front parlor being reserved for grand entertainments. The back parlor was lighted by three large windows, opening, like doors, on to a balcony. The centre window, however, was twice the size of either one of the other two, having, in addition to the double windows in the middle, narrow window doors on each side. One or the other of these narrow doors was often open at this season of the year to admit fresh air into this apartment, hot with fierce furnace heat. Like the windows in front, these were draped with rose-pink satin damask curtains and white lace lambrequins, to match the furniture.

Doctor Portley was a widower. Rose Portley, to whom St. John was now formally engaged, was his only child.

Rose was about seventeen; changeable as the wind; a truly "gushing thing;" passionately devoted one day, and cold and indifferent the next; tossed on the waves of moods and impulses. She was flaxen-haired, blue-eyed and delicately pale; a slender, fragile figure; undersized; a hand as small as a doll's, but by no means as plump; a waist but a span in circumference; and a physique and personal appearance best described by the words, petite, pleasing, pretty.

Four days after the events narrated in the preceding chapters, Rose was sitting in the extension-room on the parlor-floor engaged in embroidery. She bent over her work, which was fixed to a standing frame. Not very far

from her, Jenny, the housemaid, was making a pretence of dusting the mantel ornaments. She flourished a small feather duster.

Jenny was a fresh-looking English girl of the true cockney breed. She dearly loved to gossip with Miss Rose about the neighbors, and Rose, to speak the truth, was nothing loth.

It was about eleven o'clock in the morning, and the day was exceptionally warm, even for the latter part of March.

"Jenny," said Rose, "open one of those side windows"—the narrow window-doors already referred to in the middle window; "it's unbearably hot in this room."

"Yes, miss," answered Jenny. And she put down on the table a vase, which she had just taken from the mantel to dust, and went and did as her young mistress requested. Then she returned, and took up the vase and lightly passed her feather duster over it.

"Well, Jenny," asked Rose, without taking her eyes from her embroidery-frame, and continuing to ply her needle as she spoke, "have you found out yet who the people are that have moved in next door, into the furnished house that was to let?"

"You know, miss, hever since I come to Hamerry-kee, I makes it a pint, never to be *too* hacquisitive about other folkes' haffairs, for Mrs. Richings, that dear good Mrs. Richings, wot's now in 'eaven, the lady wot took me hin hout of the London streets, and brought me hup and gave me wittels and drinks and a heddication besides, she always used to say, Jenny, says she, never——"

"O, never mind Mrs. Richings," impatiently exclaimed

Rose. "I'm sick and tired of forever hearing you quote that tiresome Mrs. Richings. It's Mrs. Richings used to say this, and Mrs. Richings used to say that. I wish you would answer me when I ask you a question."

"Lor, ain't she cross!" thought Jenny to herself. "She must a got hout of bed with the wrong foot foremost." Then she said aloud:

"Werry good, miss; in course I'll hanswer your questions. Well, you know, miss, them new people 'ave only been hin about two days. But quite by haccident, miss, as I was pouring hout my tea, I 'eard the cook say—I didn't harsk her, mind yer, I never do—I 'eard the cook say, that hour new neighbors next door was a vidder lady and her haurnt, miss. The lady's name is Mrs. Chester, and they say she's werry 'andsome—a tall, helegant figure and such heyes—why, they're great, big, black, blazing diamonds. Leastways, that's what the cook says. Lor, I, myself, wouldn't find hout hanythink about people in a thousand years, for I was taught by that dear, good soul, Miss Rich——"

"There, there, never mind," interrupted Rose.

"Hour balcony, miss," resumed Jenny, pointing towards the windows with her duster which had performed no other service since she began talking, "leads right hon to theirn, and goes right hinto their back parlor like. Ain't it funny? Leastways that's what the cook says. Bless you, I never find hout these things. And cos vy? Cos I keeps my mind right hon my vork. I learnt that from that 'eavenly 'ooman—my blessed benefacturess. But I say, miss, wouldn't the balcony be 'andy if you should get hacquainted with them folks next door? You could valk right hinto

one another's back parlors, free and familiar like. And I'm thinking, miss, wouldn't it save a lot of running to the bell hif heverybody could come hin that way."

And Jenny giggled softly over this idea, not quite certain whether or no Rose would be displeased with her for giving it utterance.

"Mrs. Chester, our new neighbor, hasn't any children, has she?" carelessly inquired Rose, drawing out her needle.

"Neither chick nor child, miss," returned Jenny. "There's three in family; Mrs. Chester, the haurnt, a hold-ish lady, and the vidder's cousin, a 'andsome, dashing young fellar—the very himage of the vidder'erself—looks henough like 'er to be 'er hown twin brother. You might 'ave seen 'im, miss?" and she paused and looked at Rose with a roguish smile on her bright pretty face. Rose said nothing, but bent closely over the frame to conceal a blush that mantled her cheek, for, as a matter of fact, Rose had seen "Mrs. Chester's cousin," and Jenny had caught them at their adjoining windows on the floor above exchanging civilities, and as Jenny told the cook, "the howdacious fellow hactually throwed a kiss—more, two or three, at Miss Rose."

Before Rose had time to make any reply to Jenny's remark, the hall door-bell rang, and Jenny went out of the room to answer it, muttering:

"There's that bell agin. It must be on wheels, for it's going the ole blessed day and a goodish bit o' the night, too."

II.

THE INTRUDER.

THE "new neighbors" who had taken the furnished house adjoining Doctor Portley's residence, were, in fact, Vic, her aunt Dolores (who was the capitalist of the party), and Gil. The latter, in prowling about the vicinity of the Portley mansion to see what could be learnt, had noticed that the next door house was to let. The casual mention of this fact to Vic and aunt Dolores, had resulted in the conception of a deep-laid scheme, to which all three had contributed their mite. The objective point of this scheme was the overthrow of St. John's matrimonial project, and one of the methods to that end was the hiring of the furnished house by Vic under an assumed name. Mrs. Chester was, therefore, Vic, and "Mrs. Chester's cousin" was Vic also, who had donned Gil's ulster and hat, pasted on her upper lip a silky, soft mustache, and in the character of a strikingly handsome, dashing young swell, had begun a desperate flirtation with Rose Portley from one of the windows of her bedroom, which adjoined the sleeping apartment of the young lady to whom Mortimer St. John was engaged to be married.

The remark that Jenny had made about "Mrs. Chester's cousin" had recalled vividly to the mind of Rose Portley the fascinating face and graceful figure of that charming youth; and she inferred from his expressive actions, the

evident impression that she had made upon him. Her vanity was flattered. In reality, she had led up the conversation so as to ascertain from Jenny what she knew or had heard with regard to "that elegant young fellow," who still occupied her thoughts, when Jenny left the room.

Now Vic had been all the morning on the alert to gain a clandestine interview with Rose, in the manly guise of "Mrs. Chester's cousin." For the very same reason that Rose had requested Jenny to open one of the narrow window-doors, Vic had opened one of the windows in her extension-room, namely,—to freshen the heated atmosphere. It may be stated that the houses, being two of a row, were built precisely alike. Vic stepped out upon the balcony, intent upon reconnoitring, and strongly bent on her purpose. Thus she discovered that her neighbor's window-door was unclosed, and that Rose was alone in the back parlor. Nothing could be better suited to her design. With characteristic boldness and rapidity Vic decided. In a trice she was over on the Portley balcony, the only division being a low iron railing. There she stood at the window for a moment looking in upon Rose.

The last named young lady, all unconscious of Vic's scrutiny, was bending over her embroidery-frame, nor did she notice the noiseless approach from the direction of the balcony, of a person who had the appearance of being a tall, slender, dark young man of eminently handsome features and singularly noble bearing, whose eyes were large, black and flashing, whose silken mustache of raven hue shaded a delicately curved mouth and lips of coral, now parted in a smile, and disclosing two rows of pearly white teeth. At-

tired in a long ulster that completely hid her skirts, and wearing an oval felt hat, Vic bent over Rose and whispered, "Miss!"

Rose was taken by surprise. She started to her feet and screamed. "Oh!"—then recognizing the intruder—"How you frightened me! How dare you, sir? And—and how did you?"

"By the balcony, miss," explained Vic, speaking in deep tones. "One word, I beseech you. Do not go!"—and she took her gently by the hand, as Rose, still trembling, looked round with the evident intention of rushing from the room. "I have tried, Miss Portley, all means of gaining an introduction to you, but without success. I saw, by chance, your balcony window was open. I ventured to look in. You were alone. That was enough. I am here, impelled by a passion stronger than my own will. Can you forgive me?"

Rose had looked and listened at first with extreme alarm depicted in every feature, but gradually as Vic proceeded, she grew less and less afraid.

"But, sir, you are a stranger to me," she replied, "and you must not talk so. Indeed you must not. Please let me go, sir. Please go away, sir."

"Never," exclaimed Vic, with a tragic emphasis that made Rose give a start. "Never, until you tell me whether or no, you are engaged to that base, black villain—that fair, tall man—who calls here every evening. Rose Portley, star of my life"—here Vic's voice and manner became solemn, gloomy, and intense—"are you or are you not engaged to him?"

"I am," faltered Rose.

"Then my blood is on your head," cried Vic, but with forced calmness, as she drew a revolver from her ulster pocket and pointed it to her head.

"Don't—don't," almost frantically exclaimed Rose, seizing her arm and pulling it down. "How can you be so rash?"

Here voices were heard in the front parlor from behind the closed sliding doors.

"You must go," cried Rose. "My father's coming. Please do."

Vic slipped the revolver into her pocket, threw her arms around Rose's neck, and despite her struggles, kissed her on the mouth, exclaiming, "One kiss ere I die!"

Rose made efforts to be free, pleading, "O, please don't, sir!"

Vic now rushes to the balcony window, where she pauses, turns, and says impressively, "Remember, if you marry him, my blood is on your head. Adieu, sweet Rose, adieu." And she disappeared, throwing and blowing kisses to Rose with both hands.

Poor Rose was in a whirl of excitement. Her brain reeled. She ran through the hallway upstairs to her own room, where she locked herself in, and burst into a flood of tears.

II.

THE WEDDING-DAY FIXED.

THE voices that Rose and Vic had heard, were those of Doctor Portley and Mortimer St. John. These two gentlemen had entered the front parlor, where they remained in conversation.

"St. John, the only thing that lies heavy on my conscience," said Portley, in his oratorical manner, "is my inhuman—yes, inhuman neglect of the inhabitants of the Pacific slope. It is true that they can purchase my Preservative Preparations at certain points, but their facilities are limited. What is absolutely required is a central manufactory at San Francisco to diffuse widespread throughout that important region of our common country, Portley's Preservative Pills, Powders, Pellets, and Potions."

"I'd undertake to establish in San Francisco a central manufactory for your Preservative Preparations," responded St. John. "And to dispose of them by the millions. I'd flood the whole coast with circulars, press notices, and testimonials. You've plenty?"

"Bushels," replied Portley. "I've autograph testimonials as to the efficacy of my Preservative Preparations, not only from every eminent man, woman and child in this country, but likewise from all the crowned heads of Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and the Sandwich Islands. Here,

let me show you a curious letter that I received from the Emperor of China, in the year 1855." The doctor took from his breast pocket a leathern wallet, from which he selected a carefully preserved paper, and unfolded it with infinite caution. "I never allow this precious document to leave my person. It reads thus:" The Doctor threw out his chest, adjusted his silver-rimmed eye-glasses, and read as follows, with due emphases and rhetorical pauses, from the worn and yellow piece of paper which he held with both hands.

"TO DOCTOR PHILANDER POTTER PORTLEY IN AMERICA.

"The great curing Barbarian of the outside country.

"O good, great and wise Preservator !

"Your present of sweet curing seeds ('that's what he calls the Pills and Pellets,' parenthetically explained Portley), and your fragrant curing drops ('the Potions'), and your heavenly dust ('the Powders'), has been brought to Hug-seu-Tsene—the mighty Emperor (Kwangto) of the terrible, stout Ming dynasty (by grace of Heaven revived after an interval of ages), Prince of peace (Ta-ping-Wang) of China—the Central Flowery Land. He directed his powerful Mandarins to give them to the sick according to what the interpreters read from your printed papers. ('He means the directions.') Be profoundly happy ! O, wise Barbarian ! O great and good Portley ! for I, even I, Yang-seu-Tsing, say it. Your sweet curing seeds, your fragrant drops and your heavenly dust, were given to the sick in his army of the Winged Sword, and have made them whole—yea, well and whole. Again I say it, O wise, and great, and good barbarian of the outside country, be profoundly happy while you live, for this that is here written, is known to the mighty Emperor of China, who approves your skill and permits you to send more of

your Preservative Preparations and curing medicines to his fierce armies of myriads of men.

"They may be given to Chiang-Lin, chief Mandarin of the Red Button, at Shangai, who will repay you with Tea, or Silk, or Gold.

"The high Mandarins of China have heard of your great knowledge and wonderful skill, surpassing in these qualities all other foreigners and barbarians, even aspiring to equal the divine and miraculous wisdom of our own healing teachers who make remedies that are instant cures. We are pleased to know that you bow in trembling terror before our Mighty Emperor.

"Written by YANG-SEU-TSING,
Minister-in-chief of the restored Imperial
Ming dynasty, destined by the heavenly
wisdom to rule in China."

*(Translated at the American Consulate, Hong Kong, China,
May 3rd, 1855.)*

"There! What do you think of that?" triumphantly asked Portley, as he put away in the wallet the above remarkable production.

"Excellent! excellent!" said St. John. "I would advise you to have this and other similar testimonials extensively circulated. And now's just the time to begin on the Pacific coast—the rainy season. Very sickly."

"Very well; all right," replied Portley. "You and Rose must be married at once. I'll make you my sole agent for the manufacture and sale of my Preservative Preparations on the Pacific coast. Your stock-jobbing operations, or your sheep-farming will not interfere with your attending to this business, eh?"

"Not in the least, sir," truthfully responded St. John,

whose blonde face glowed with pleasure at the near prospect of his marriage with Rose, and his consequent handling of some of Portley's money, with which he hoped to enrich himself by using it in certain stock-jobbing schemes that he thought very promising.

"How delighted I am to have such a man as you are, St. John, for a son-in-law," exclaimed Portley, grasping his hand. "There is only one thing that you absolutely require, now that you are going to marry my daughter, to make you perfection?"

"What's that, sir?"

"A thorough, searching, and unconditional course of my Preservative Preparations," was Portley's reply, delivered in his usual forcible tones and deliberate manner. St. John listened in dismay. "I'll give you a daily dose of my Pills, Powders, Pellets, and Potions to begin with." And to St. John's increased alarm, the Doctor took from his pocket a long, flat, pasteboard box which he placed in St. John's hand, who was fearful lest he might be required to swallow the compounds in Portley's presence. "Don't be afraid of them, St. John. They have never been known to fail, and the beauty of it is, they can't hurt you. Why, there's a man here in New York, over seventy years of age, who has made an affidavit, and I have got it, that he has taken five of these doses daily for the last thirty years, and the brave old soul never missed a day. By a simple calculation"—Portley reflected a moment, ran the palm of his hand over his bald cranium, and then smoothed his silvery whiskers—"by a slight arithmetical operation, this gives fifty-four thousand seven hundred and fifty doses, or two hundred and

nineteen thousand Pills, Powders, Pellets, and Potions that have found their way into the stomach of this strong, hale, and hearty old man of seventy years of age. And the brave old boy keeps at it like a brick."

"Well, sir," remarked St. John, who had dexterously deposited the box of medicines in his coat tail pocket, and who now took advantage of a break in the resistless flow of Portley's eloquence to press forward his own plans. "The sooner we are married, the sooner I shall be able to perfect my arrangements to open a magnificent factory and depot in San Francisco for the disposal of these articles. I'd start for San Francisco immediately after the wedding."

"Would you?" queried Portley, much pleased with this show of devotion. "Much as I admire your energy, I admire your self-sacrifice still more. And I see now how you have made your immense fortune; you've got pluck, energy and perseverance—the nest eggs of success. Come with me up to my study; we'll agree upon details and the amount of money required. Then we'll see where Rose is—she must make haste for the wedding."

As they passed into the hall and ascended the staircase to the doctor's study, St. John said to himself, "Everything goes on like clock-work, and pure, unadulterated cheek is the spring that keeps the works in motion."

IV.

A DESPERATE THREAT.

WHILE the doctor and St. John were conversing, Rose had come down stairs noiselessly and unobserved by them—the parlor door was ajar,—had gone into the extension room to get her embroidery-frame, having quite recovered from the effects of her outburst of tears, and really feeling relieved thereby, she thought to resume her work in her own room.

In the extension room she found a tall, willowy young man, whose face was very pale, whose thin side-whiskers were of a pale straw color, whose cravat was pale blue, and whose slim and nervous figure was clothed in a suit of pale brown cloth. He was examining the product of Rose's deft fingers, as that young lady entered and approached the embroidery-frame.

This was Edmond Lee, the doctor's secretary, and a distant relative of his. He was an inmate of the Portley household, and was treated on a footing of equality, though the doctor held him in some contempt, because, as he convincingly exclaimed, "Look at him! He hasn't got a drop of blood in his veins."

Rose seemed to be a little annoyed when she saw Edmond Lee. She had avoided meeting him alone since the advent of St. John.

"Rose, is it all settled?" abruptly asked Edmond, his long, pale hands quivering.

"Yes, Ed, you must now think of me only as a friend. It is settled that I am to marry the California millionaire," returned Rose.

"Curse him! Curse him," bursts from Edmond's lips in a low, hoarse, concentrated whisper. "So, Rose, you have given me up for this money-bag. But his money don't make him bullet-proof."

"O, Edmond, how you talk! You make me shiver," said Rose, turning away, as though intending to leave the room. But moved by a touch of pity, she approached him and said, deprecatingly, "You know, Ed, I would have married you if father would have consented, but we both knew how useless it was to ask him. And I have told you again and again, I would never marry against father's wish. You ought to submit to circumstances, Ed; I do."

Edmond maintained a moody silence for a few moments. Then he spoke in the same, low, hoarse voice, indicative of the suppressed excitement under which he was laboring, his eyes fixed on the floor.

"Rose, when I arrived in New York—a simple country boy—and when your father took me at once into his employ as his private secretary, I came to this house and have lived here ever since. That's something over a year now. From the very hour that I saw you, I nourished a hope that one day you would be mine. You fed and encouraged that hope by looks, by words, by every little action. I was in the seventh heaven. A day came when we were alone in this room as we are now. We confessed to each other our love, and you promised to be my wife."

"O, Ed," cried Rose, in an agitated voice, "spare me! That's all past. We've agreed to consider it as though it had never happened. And as to my engagement to this St. John, I can't help myself."

"Can't help yourself! That's what maddens me." Edmond looked at her with glittering eyes, as he spoke, his face flushed, his arms hanging down rigidly, and his fists clenched. "You don't marry this man of your own free will and choice?"

"You know I don't," Rose replied.

"Then if something should happen to prevent this marriage, you'd be pleased, wouldn't you, Rose?" He asked the question through his set teeth.

"More than pleased," responded Rose. "But what do you mean? Your looks frighten me, Ed!"

"You'd be more than pleased!" he muttered. "I'll lay him out before sundown, if I swing for it." Then aloud. "Good-bye, Rose." And without another word he left the room.

Rose sat down at her embroidery-frame, but did not touch the work.

"Poor fellow," she murmured, "he's dying for me. But he'll get over it. He's very passionate and bitter against St. John. Well, Mr. Mortimer St. John will make the very worst investment he ever made, the day he marries me. I just hate him, but father says I must marry him, and I suppose I must. I've got to marry some one, and probably he's no worse than any one whom I *could* marry. But when I'm Mrs. St. John, I'll spend his money like water, I'll flirt with the best looking fellows, and have a gay time gen-

erally, to make up for the sacrifice. Now, I really wouldn't mind marrying that elegant young fellow next door. What charming impudence, to come in here unannounced and un-introduced, and speak to me the way he did! How he did talk! Well, he's just dead in love with me."

Portley here came into the room, saying, "Rose, I've been looking for you. You must get yourself ready without delay. I've just agreed with St. John to have the marriage take place in a week."

"O, father," wept Rose. "A week. So soon?"

"Yes, Rose, in a week," replied Portley, decidedly. He never allowed the slightest opposition to his will in those under his control. "Get ready, Rose. Spare no expense. St. John will be here early to-day. He has gone down town to my banker with an order from me to put one hundred thousand dollars to the credit of your future husband on the day of his marriage to you. That's the capital with which to start the manufacture and sale of my Preservative Preparations on the Pacific Slope."

As the Doctor finished speaking, Jenny appeared at the door, and made the announcement that "a genelman wanted to see the Doctor."

"Did he give any name, Jenny?" Portley asked.

"Yes, sir," replied Jenny; "Mr. Philpitcher, I think he said, sir."

"Philpitcher! Philpitcher! Oh, I see! Philpot. Didn't he say Philpot?"

"Yes, sir, summat like that," contentedly answered Jenny.

"Well, ask him in here, Jenny."

"Yes, sir," emitted Jenny, and retired.

V.

VIC MAKES A STARTLING DISCLOSURE.

"I WONDER what Philpot wants," thought Portley, as he paced up and down the spacious and elegantly appointed apartment. "Yes, Rose, you are to marry the man who is going to place my Preservative Pills, Powders, Pellets and Potions into the hands, or rather into the mouths, of every man, woman and child and heathen Chinees on the Pacific Coast."

Jenny now threw open the door and ushered in Vic, in the disguise of Philpot, the detective.

She wore the same gray wig and beard and blue glasses as she did on her first meeting with Portley, and likewise the same, long, dark frock coat, buttoned closely across the breast. One of Gil's collars and a frowsy neck-tie peeped above the coat-collar. She had on a pair of the same gentleman's boots, and had cleverly fitted and tacked to the tops of the same, the leggings from the knee downwards, of an old pair of discarded pantaloons, likewise the property of her accommodating brother. By pinning up her skirts, which were hidden by the long, Dundreary frock coat, descending all round half way below the knee, she had the appearance of being a careless, slovenly attired old gentleman addicted to the apparel in vogue of a quarter of a century ago. Her hands were covered with gray cotton gloves.

Under one arm she carried a well-worn gingham umbrella, and in her left hand an old slouched hat. Aunt Dolores and Gil had assisted her in her masquerading feat (they were indeed parties to the whole transaction), and had pronounced her transformation perfect. Vic's strong histrionic bias had caused her to enter into the spirit of the affair with genuine zest, thoroughly enjoying the fun of the thing; but beyond this foolery, which for itself alone she never would have undertaken to disguise herself, she had a set purpose to accomplish in again impersonating old Philpot.

Vic bowed gravely to Portley and Rose, as she advanced into the room.

"How *do* you do, Mr. Philpot?" said Portley. "My daughter, Mr. Philpot." Rose and Vic bow as they are introduced. "To what am I indebted for the honor of this visit?"

Portley's tone and manner, as he asked the question, looking severely at the suppositious Philpot through his silver-rimmed glasses and carelessly fingering his white whiskers, plainly said, "Do you know, sir, it's blank cheeky of you to come to this house without first announcing your business through the mail and getting an invitation?"

"Sir," began Vic, in the squeaking voice so natural to debilitated elderly gentlemen, and which so effectually disguised her own, "I should never have presumed to call upon you if I did not have something of the very greatest importance to communicate to you."

"Ah! Indeed!" queried Portley, softening. "Shall we retire to my study?"

"No, sir," returned Vic. "For this discovery—I have

made an important discovery—concerns both you and your daughter.”

“Really,” said Portley, becoming interested.

“Me!” echoed Rose, in mild surprise.

“Yes, Miss Portley,” replied Vic, addressing herself to Rose and to her father at the same time. “It is my unpleasant mission to inform you that the person to whom you are engaged to be married is a penniless adventurer—a fortune hunter—a confidence man.”

Rose and Portley received this astounding piece of intelligence in speechless amazement.

Rose was the first to find her tongue, and gave vent to her feelings in a half-shriek, exclaiming, as she pressed the back of her head with her locked hands, “Goodness!”

Portley struck an attitude of statuesque surprise, and demanded, “Can this be possible? How did you make this alarming discovery? Why, you yourself said that Mortimer St. John was O. K. in stocks, and sheep-ranches, you know?”

“I repeat what I said before—ST. JOHN—MORTIMER ST. JOHN IS all right,” answered Vic, mysteriously, and shaking a warning forefinger in token of a coming revealment of deep import, and soliciting the undivided attention of her listeners. Father and daughter drank in every word as it fell from her lips.

“Let me explain,” continued Vic, with an old man’s frequent pauses, to make certain that her circumstantial narrative, which was an entire fabrication, was wholly understood by her hearers. “Mortimer St. John is a man in whom I always took a deep interest, and when I learned he

was going to marry into your family I was really more interested in him than ever. It so happened that I met him in the street a day or two ago—the first time I had seen him since his arrival in New York. I stopped and congratulated him. ‘Ah! Mortimer, my son,’ said I, ‘so you are going to ally yourself to the family of the eminent and distinguished Doctor Philander Potter Portley—a man whose fame takes its rise from the times of the better and purer days of the Republic?’”

Portley bristled with pride and pleasure, and his red face grew redder, hearing himself thus spoken of; whereupon he made the mental observation, “What a remarkably clear headed old fellow this Philpot is?”

Vic noted well the effect of her words, and proceeded with her story as follows:

“St. John looked at me puzzled—almost alarmed—when I congratulated him. ‘Philpot,’ he asked, ‘are you mad?’ ‘Why mad?’ I inquired. ‘Well,’ he replied, ‘I would esteem myself one of the proudest and happiest of men, if I had the distinguished honor of counting among my friends so famous, so well-beloved a philanthropist as the celebrated Doctor Philander Potter Portley, but the fact is, it has never been my good fortune to meet that eminent citizen and renowned patriot, whom to know must be at once a privilege and a pleasure.’”

As Vic paused in her narration, the doctor threw up his hands, passed one over his burnished pate, and then thrust his thumbs into the arm-holes of his vest, and thus stood in the attitude of a man completely mystified, and yet with an expression on his countenance which bespoke the immense

gratification he was receiving upon hearing himself praised in such high-sounding phrases. Rose listened in mute wonder, drawing nearer to her father.

Vic continued, gathering confidence as she proceeded :

“‘What!’ I exclaimed, ‘Mortimer St. John, can you look me in the face and say you do not know—personally know—Doctor Portley and his beautiful daughter, Rose?’ ‘Unfortunately for me, Philpot,’ he answered, ‘I do not know either, but I should be delighted to become acquainted. Can’t you introduce a fellow?’ I looked at him in utter amazement, and then told him that Doctor Portley had called at my office to inquire about Mortimer St. John of San Francisco, who was paying his addresses to his only daughter. When I said that, he started, clutched me nervously by the hand and arm—so”—and Vic grasped Portley’s hand and arm and looked into his countenance, whose every lineament expressed intense interest and surprise—“and gazing anxiously into my face, he asked, ‘Philpot, *can* it be possible?’ ‘What?’ I inquired. ‘That somebody is personating me?’ he gasped. ‘Very likely, Mortimer,’ I answered; ‘that’s a game that is played almost every day.’ He then went on to inform me that when he came on here from San Francisco, he made, on the cars, the acquaintance of a very plausible and insinuating gentleman, with whom he played cards, lost a pile of money and became intimate, communicating to him all his affairs. When they arrived in New York, they parted; he saw him no more, and he soon found that all his letters of introduction were missing. He had shown the fellow the packet of letters, saying that he had no knowledge of the parties to whom they were ad-

dressed. I asked St. John to describe the man to me. I spotted him before he had spoken half a dozen words. 'Why, it's Slippery Dick, alias Tim Slapjack,' said I, at once. 'The most expert gambler and confidence man on the Pacific Coast.' 'Of course, St. John,' said I, 'you have been round to the parties to whom you had letters of introduction and notified them of your loss?' 'Why, no,' he replied, 'they were all strangers to me, and I kept no memorandum of their names and addresses; so I couldn't.'"

The Doctor began to perspire. He drew out his red silk bandanna pocket handkerchief, took off his glasses, and slowly mopped his face, neck, and shining skull. He looked like a man upon whom a great light was gradually breaking. He listened to the remainder of Vic's extraordinary story in the posture of one transfixed, his raised hand grasping the flame-colored bandanna, the other holding, poised in mid-air, his silver-rimmed eye-glasses.

"Well, Doctor, I have worked up the case, and in a very strange manner, I have got hold of a most rascally document given by this bogus St. John—a sort of promissory note for five thousand dollars, based upon his marriage to your daughter—in fact, to be paid after said marriage. I gave it to St. John—that is, to the *real* St. John."

"Great heavens!" Portley now burst forth in the thunder-tones of his oratorical voice. "And this man, whom I have taken to my heart and home, is not—is n't—Mortimer St. John, but an impostor—one Slippery Dick, alias Tim Slapjack! Great Jupiter! A gambler and a confidence man! Horrible!"

Rose could only murmur as the silent tears stole down her cheeks, "What an escape!"

"Is all this positively certain?" asked Portley. "Ain't there some frightful mistake? Pinch me, Rose; perhaps I'm dreaming. O, my brain!"

And he pressed his bandanna upon the polished covering of his "dome of thought," pacing the while, up and down, greatly excited. Rose was too absorbed to comply with her parent's request to be pinched.

"Mistake, indeed!" exclaimed Vic, scornfully. "Why, don't I know St. John, and don't I know Slippery Dick? But stop, I'll prove it to you. Haven't you got a photograph of this man, Miss Portley?"

"Certainly," replied Rose. And she tripped to the mantel-piece, and took therefrom a beautifully executed imperial photograph of Mortimer St. John, which she handed to Vic. The doctor and Rose approached her, and watched every movement she made, exhibiting intense excitement and interest as she carefully examined the portrait.

"The very man himself," broke out Vic. "He! he!" She laughed triumphantly, with an old man's feeble cachination. "It's Slippery Dick, sir—Slippery Dick, by Jove!" And she emphatically slapped the palm of her hand with the photograph. "Allow me to congratulate you and your daughter upon this most fortunate escape from the clutches of a villain."

Vic here seized Portley's hand with her right and Rose's with her left hand, and gave them both a hearty shake.

"Philpot! my dear friend, Phil-pot!" exclaimed Portley, his sonorous voice rolling forth in organ-tones, and giving Vic such a powerful handshaking that she retained a painfully acute remembrance of it for some time afterwards,

and pronouncing the name with impressive prolongation and effusive tearfulness. "Phil-pot! Heaven bless and preserve you, Phil-pot! You have earned the eternal gratitude of a Portley, of Philander Potter Portley! Think of that! The man—he stands before you now—who by his Preservative Preparations, renowned in both hemispheres, has given to the best portion of the human race, vitality, force, and efficacy. Philpot! my heart is too full to say more!"

"Then, sir, don't attempt it," returned Vic, dropping his hand, and likewise Rose's, and raising her finger and moving it slowly to and fro, to attract the further attention of her listeners. "Now, there is a second part to this singular story. The real St. John, he whom I met, and who is personated by this infamous Slippery Dick, is, strange as it may seem, a next door neighbor of yours. He lives with his cousin, Mrs. Chester, who has moved in but a few days."

Rose gasped with astonishment as she looked at Vic, with eyes saucer-wide, exclaiming, "He's the true St. John!"

"Indeed!" remarked Portley. "This *is* news. Will wonders never cease? Rose, we must make their acquaintance."

"Yes, father," answered Rose meekly, with becoming obedience. "If you wish it. Certainly, if you want me to be acquainted."

She was in such a tumult internally, that she could scarcely contain herself.

"And so that there can be no mistake," now said Vic, taking from her pocket, a paper, "I will give you a written

description of the real St. John, which I had prepared to enter in my books; however, you can have it. I can easily write out another one. You can readily see what a difference there is between the two men."

And she handed Portley a paper containing a description of herself, dressed as a young gentleman.

Portley perused it carefully, and noted the points of difference, and remarked upon the audacity of "the fellow in attempting to pass himself off for a person whom he did not resemble in any one particular," while Rose read it over his shoulder and mentally compared the description with "that elegant young fellow, Mrs. Chester's cousin," and thought it did not do him justice.

All at once Portley struck an attitude, brought the fingers of his right hand down upon the palm of his left, with sudden vehemence, causing a sound like the report of a small pistol, and exclaimed:

"I know what I'm going to do!"

"What?" asked Vic, not without some alarm.

"By the great Jupiter!" rolled out Portley, striding towards the door, "I'll have that scoundrel locked up before nightfall."

He stopped for a moment to explain, as Vic, now terror-stricken, asked, "Who? What?"

This was a possibility she had not taken into account, and she shook with fear at the idea that Portley might really have St. John arrested.

"Who? That imposter, Slippery Dick!" returned Portley. "Don't you see, he'll be sure to come back here. Now, I'll have the police right in the house—ready to nab

him—don't you see, Philpot, my boy?" And he gave Vic a sounding slap on the shoulder.

"Yes," urged Rose. "Hurry off, father, and get the police. I shall never feel safe until he's under arrest."

Vic's sudden apprehensions lasted but a few moments. Her indomitable will, ready wit and splendid courage came to her aid.

"You may save yourself all further trouble concerning his arrest," she said, calmly and confidently.

"Why, he ain't in quod already?" queried Portley.

"No; but it's provided for. We can take him whenever we want him. He suspects nothing. He is watched. My men follow all his footsteps. Whenever it suits our purpose, we'll nab him. Besides, Doctor, this is a matter that concerns St. John, under whose orders I am acting, more deeply even, than it concerns you, and you and St. John should act in concert in the matter of arresting him. Now, I'll just step in to St. John, next door, and if he is at home, I'll ask him to come in and see you about this affair."

This proposition seemed reasonable enough to Portley, who abandoned, for the present, his intention of procuring the police, preferring to meet and consult with the aggrieved gentleman, according to the suggestion made by the presumptive Philpot.

Vic thereupon took her leave, well-pleased with her visit, and feeling not a little relieved in averting the threatened danger of St. John's apprehension.

VI.

THE PROMISSORY NOTE AGAIN.

PORTLEY and Rose awaited the coming of the expected visitor from the adjoining dwelling, in silence, each occupied with thoughts colored by emotions natural to their respective characters, ages and desires.

The father accepted without a grain of doubt the startling narrative which the supposed Philpot had so minutely related, with the many probable details, ingeniously invented, aiming to carry conviction, under the circumstances, to a mind like Portley's, filled with the sense of his own importance, and whose occupation and mode of dealing with the world predisposed him to divide mankind into two great classes, namely, those who defrauded, and those who were defrauded.

In about twenty minutes from the time of Vic's departure, Jenny entered with a silver salver, on which there was a card with a name on it, in writing. Jenny's countenance wore a very mysterious expression as she looked hard at Rose, while she handed the card to the doctor, saying:

"A genelman, if you please, to see you, sir."

And then she renewed her scrutiny of Rose's physiognomy, muttering:

"I'd like to see 'er brass plate ven 'e henters. I vunder whether she'll blush or whether she'll turn pale. I'll peek through the key 'ole."

"Why, here he is," said Portley, reading the card. "Mortimer St. John, of San Francisco."

Rose blushed. Her heart gave a jump as she recalled the singular interview with the very person whose card she now took from her father's hand, and read. Turning to Jenny, who was eyeing her attentively, she said as carelessly as she could, "Ask the gentleman to walk in, Jenny."

"Yes, miss," replied Jenny, who went out, saying to herself:

"So 'e's Mr. St. John, too? Then there's two on 'em? And this cove's coming 'ere too to wisit Miss Rose. Well, I've 'eard of mystifying things, but this is the most mystifyingest of hall."

In a few moments Jenny returned, and ushered in a tall, slender, graceful young gentleman, to all appearances, whose face was dark and strikingly handsome, and whom Rose immediately recognized as "Mrs. Chester's cousin."

Vic had had recourse again to Gil's wardrobe, and had selected therefrom a new suit of clothes of diagonal cloth,—dark in color and stylish in cut; for Gil was particular in the choice of his tailor, and believed in the adage which affirms that one might as well be in one's grave-clothes as to don garments not bearing the seal and stamp of fashion.

Fortunately Vic and Gil were about equal in height, and of much the same size otherwise. Therefore, his apparel fitted her, with the aid of a little judicious padding, as though made for her, and aided the illusion which she sought to produce much better than if it had been cut out for her figure, inasmuch as the peculiarities of the female form were concealed in attire made for a masculine figure. An

eminent actress in San Francisco, who had gained celebrity in the impersonation of male characters, had taught Vic that the greatest difficulty that a woman has to overcome in dressing for the stage in man's attire, is to annihilate, for the time being, from the spectator's mind, the knowledge that a woman is on the boards in man's habiliments. This perfection of illusion was largely, if not wholly, due to the "make up." Not only is it necessary that the person be of the shape and size that will lend themselves most readily to the graceful and natural use of man's apparel, and the shape and size best adapted to this purpose, require that a woman have long limbs, that is, long in proportion to the female trunk or body, and that she be of a slender build and above the medium height, but likewise that the clothes be made for her by a tailor who must understand that he is to make them as though he were working for a man of the same stature and build. Appropriate padding must do the rest. The tailor should on no account attempt to fit the clothes to the female figure. *That* is specially to be avoided, and in its avoidance—other things being equal—may be found the secret of the success achieved by artists in this line. The outward semblance of the male figure alone is seen, the contours of the female form being encased therein. Thus, there is nothing to remind the spectator that a woman in man's attire is walking the boards.

Vic had remembered, and had on occasion practised these maxims, for she never forgot whatever she heard concerning stage art, in the sense of "make up," and, for an amateur, she was an adept in the mysteries of stage dressing.

The result was, that she was enabled to present herself

in the male character she had assumed, with absolute success.

She had the semblance of a stylish, dashing, very prepossessing young fellow, captivating and rather effeminate-looking, perhaps, in the masculine sight, but of absolutely ravishing and seductive beauty to the female eye. The delicate silken mustache, worn in her first, surreptitious visit to Rose, shaded her upper lip; her mouth—a Cupid's bow—was wreathed in a pleasant smile, disclosing her faultless white teeth. She daintily twirled a little cane in her gloved hands. Her head was artistically covered with a handsome black wig that Gil had brought for her from the office, and which concealed her own abundant raven locks. She had on an oval felt hat, as to the crown, with a slightly turned, narrow brim. Her shirt, shirt-collar, and white neck-tie were perfection, for Gil's shirt-maker was one of the best in the city, and his laundress, a heaven-born washerwoman, recently landed from the Emerald Isle.

Advancing towards Rose and the Doctor with easy grace, removing her hat, Vic said in her rich, deep tones, "Doctor Portley, I presume?"

To Rose she said nothing; but she gazed at her with a smile and a look of deep meaning.

Rose endeavored to hide her confusion by bending over her embroidery, at which she now sat, her face suffused with blushes.

"Ah! Miss Rose's phiz tells the tale," muttered Jenny, as she retired.

"The same, sir, and your very obedient servant," returned Portley, throwing himself into a position, and examining

Vic through his silver-rimmed eye-glasses, with manifest admiration.

"This is the genuine Mr. Mortimer St. John?" he asked, with a smile.

Vic bowed acquiescence, as she gave her hand into Portley's hearty grasp.

"Allow me, sir, to introduce you to my daughter," and Portley waved his hands towards Rose, who inclined her head.

"Pleased to know you, Doctor, and you, Miss Portley," said Vic. "I owe this pleasure to somewhat singular circumstances." A clear, ringing laugh.

"Yes, indeed, most extraordinary circumstances," replied Portley. "Mr. Philpot, I presume, has told you everything?"

"Everything."

"Come, Mr. St. John," said Portley, "take a seat and make yourself comfortable."

He got chairs and placed them near to where Rose was now plying her needle. They sat down. Portley opened the conversation in a patronizing manner, with the remark, in the manner of a speech:

"What a pity you were so victimized, and by such a plausible rascal! Ah! he couldn't have played *that* racket on Portley. O, no, not any, thank you. I've travelled too much. Of course, he got into my good graces on the strength of *your* letters of introduction, which gave him standing and character in the eyes of those who introduced him to me and, who were, of course, deceived by his stolen credentials. But, sir, let me inform you, I had my suspi-

cions for all that. Pretty sharp nose, this, sir'—tapping the the side of the organ named,—“been a good deal round the world. For, I went to that detective—Philpot—to inquire about Mortimer St. John, as I then thought him to be. Philpot's is the best known in the city,—he advertises;—level head! It seems Philpot, just back from San Francisco, knew you, and naturally enough he gave you the very highest moral character. What more could I desire for the husband of my child—my only child? Money, riches, power! How can they compare with moral character? I learnt that St. John *had* moral character. *That* decided me. He should have my precious jewel—my Rose. Did I want to know whether he was rich in this world's goods? Why should I? Did he not possess the infinite wealth—the inexhaustible gold mine of moral character? Moral character! Ah!”

Portley fairly groaned at his inability to express the depth, breadth, and height of his sentiments. His manly frame quivered; his fiery-red visage glowed redder; his silvered whiskers, mustache, and side locks gleamed; and his eyes flashed behind his silver-rimmed eye-glasses, while his grand orotund voice filled the room with metallic, trumpet-stirring notes. After a few moments' mournful pause, Portley observed, “Blame it! never imagined the man was such a fraud!”

“I scarcely now regret falling in with the scoundrel,” said Vic, with a winning smile. “Since it has been the means of making me acquainted with the famous Dr. Portley and his beautiful and accomplished daughter.”

Vic used the magnificent battery of her flashing, sparkling

eyes upon poor Rose, who blushed to the very roots of her hair. And then this consummate actress half rose from her seat, and seizing Portley's hands in a hearty shake, which became emphatic with every emphatic word, she said, "Sir, *honored* sir," Portley was taken a little by surprise; looked at her with upturned face, and involuntarily submitted to the handshaking. "How much sir, how much I owe to *you*, and especially to your celebrated *Preservative* Preparations. Several times in my life they have snatched me from death's door and *slammed* it, so to speak, in the face of the dread visitant." Here she dropped his hands. "You may judge, then, with what eagerness I acted upon Mr. Philpot's suggestion to call and see you—YOU, the beneficent preserver of my life, by your priceless, peerless *Preservative* Pills, Powders, Pellets and Potions."

Portley was evidently much affected. The words struggled to his lips and then issued forth in pathetic tones.

"Sir, I can only thank you," he said, in simple, manly eloquence. "Your words fall upon my ears like the soft strains of some old familiar melody of childhood. It is impossible for me to express my feelings at your beautiful tribute to my *Preservative* Preparations. Excuse my emotion." Here he whipped out his red bandanna, and removing his glasses, gently mopped up his imperceptible tears, saying behind his handkerchief, "Nature will have her way, sir—will have her way." And he said to himself, "So this is the young fellow that's got the rocks and the ranches, the sheep and the mining stocks. He might take a fancy to Rose, after all."

"Doctor," observed Vic, determined to set at rest all fears

on one point, at least, "I hope you will take no steps to apprehend this villain who has been passing himself off for me, because I have given Philpot full power to have him arrested. You see, when he is under arrest you can then prefer your charges against him. We might interfere with one another if we both attempted to apprehend him on different warrants, and without intending it, perhaps, aid him in escaping."

"Very well; if that's your opinion, I will leave the matter entirely in your hands. Philpot seemed to take much the same view."

"Then you will make no arrest without first consulting me?" persisted Vic.

"Certainly not," returned Portley.

"That's one weight off my mind," muttered Vic to herself. Then she said aloud as a thought occurred to her, "Suppose he should call here, would he walk in unannounced?" The bare mention of such a possibility made her heart sink. "He must, on no account, see me; it would put him on his guard."

"No fear of that," answered Portley, "for Jenny has strict orders to show no one into this room, without first announcing them—not, at least, when I am here."

"Ah! very well," rejoined Vic, much relieved. "And now I will show you a precious little document that Philpot picked up. It illustrates the dark ways of this Slippery Dick or Tim Slapjack, whichever name he is known best by among his cut-throat intimates."

Vic took from her pocket a folded paper. "But, mind, not a word about it to a soul, until it is produced in court."

"Not a word—I promise," solemnly protested Portley; "and Portley's promise is as good as Portley's Preservative Pills, Powders, Pellets and Potions."

"Then read it," said Vic, handing him St. John's promissory note.

Portley adjusted his silver-rimmed eye-glasses, and taking the paper, which he slowly unfolded, began to read it.

"It's his own handwriting, that I know," he remarked. He perused it in an audible voice, dwelling specially on the clause, "This note to be due and payable thirty days after my marriage with Miss Rose Portley of this city."

"Infamous!" broke out Rose, who had hitherto been listening to the conversation of the fascinating young stranger in enchanted silence.

"Why," said Portley, "he's been borrowing money on Rose, and has put her up as security. Made of her a sort of ante-nuptial collateral." Then he glanced at the signature at the bottom of the promissory note, and reading "'Mortimer St. John.' Why, that's a forgery. You could have him indicted for forgery."

"Just what I intend to do," quickly rejoined Vic, who instantly saw the point, and turned it to account. "That's the reason, between me, you and the post, why I want you to keep your hands off for the present. Remember, Miss Portley," turning to Rose, "if he comes here, treat him precisely as before so as to throw him off his guard."

"Rose understands. Mum's the word," Portley cautioned her.

"Certainly," said Rose. "The horrid fellow."

"I can't tell you, Mr. St. John," observed Portley, who

thought it was about time to touch upon another subject which he had been revolving in his mind, "how delighted I am to know that we are such near neighbors. You reside with your cousin, Mrs. Chester?"

"With my cousin and my aunt," was Vic's response.

"Then I will not lose a moment in calling upon them," replied Portley. And he said to himself, "I'll leave them alone. They'd make a handsome team."

"My aunt I know is at home," answered Vic. "I'm not so certain about my cousin, Mrs. Chester. I know they'd be delighted to receive you."

"Well, I will call at once upon your aunt in a friendly way," said Portley. "In the meantime my daughter will entertain you. Rose, my child, do the honors in my absence."

Portley rose. Vic, and the blushing, fair, and fragile daughter stood up likewise. The fond father kissed the cheek of his only child with paternal solicitude, heaving a deep sigh. He then took Vic's hand and shook good-bye, leaving the room in silence, but with profuse, courtly bows, which Vic returned with interest, accompanying him to the very door, which had no sooner closed upon him, when she returned to the middle of the spacious and elegantly furnished apartment where the fluttering Rose stood, her cheeks tingling with a bright red spot, whence spread over her countenance a delicate blush causing her to look really beautiful.

VII.

JENNY COMPLAINS OF THE KEY-HOLE.

VIC gently took Rose by both hands, and interlocked her fingers with hers, holding her arms slightly raised. She stood thus in front of her for a moment or two in eloquent silence, gazing fondly into her eyes. Rose was all tender confusion. Vic all radiant rapture.

"Adorable creature!" began Vic, in a voice of rich music. "We are now alone. For this blissful moment I have prayed night and day."

"How can you, sir?" simpered Rose. And she thought to herself, "How sweet he is on me!"

"Come, I've something to tell you," Vic continued, in the same fond tone and manner. "Do you know how I became a next door neighbor of yours?" Rose nodded negatively. "The very day I arrived in New York, I saw you in the street. You did not see me, peerless creature, but your image was *photographed* upon my brain"—she disengaged her right hand and placed it upon her head—" *electro-typed* upon my heart"—she freed her left hand and indicated the region of the important physiological organ to which she had so pathetically alluded. "I followed you." Here her hands fell gracefully to her sides. "You came to this house. I was *rooted* to the spot. At last, an idea struck me. It was plain I had fallen hopelessly, madly in love at first sight. I saw there was a furnished house to rent next

door to yours. I induced my cousin and aunt to leave the hotel where we were staying, and come and take this house so I could live with them and be near to you. How can you wonder at my passionate devotion? Indeed, I would be the strangest man that ever lived—a man, the most insensible to female loveliness, if I did not worship, if I did not envy the very ground on which you tread!”

Vic paused in her swift and passionate eloquence, and thought within herself, “I wonder if she’ll stand it any stronger than that. I guess I’ve obliterated every trace of St. John’s image from her mind, if there ever was any.”

Rose stood perfectly still in silent raptures. As the thirsty, panting hart at the shady brook, her ears drank in Vic’s honeyed and impassioned utterances. One thought alone was in her mind, “O, I do wish he’d keep talking right on.”

Vic clasped Rose by the right hand, and stole one arm round her waist. She then said in tones of concentrated energy, and with vehement emphasis:

“Dear, dear girl—my life, my soul, my ALL. By every right, human and divine, you are mine. Are we not affinities? We are! Are not our souls attracted to one another? They are! Do we not bask in the sunshine of love? We do! Therefore, Rose Portley, you are mine—mine. Come closer, Rose; why so shy, so cold to him who regards you as his soul’s idol. There is now no obstacle to our union. You surely know how I love you. Sweet Rose, dear Rose, you love me, do you not? Speak, dearest, truest, brightest, best!”

Vic’s expressive and beautiful countenance glowed and

beamed with more than mortal beauty. Her eyes flashed from their black and brilliant depths, love-lit glances upon Rose, which fairly fascinated her and held her captive. Her head swam and sank on Vic's shoulder as she murmured, "Yes, I *do* love you, Mortimer!"

"O, I'm overjoyed," rapturously exclaimed Vic. "And if your father consents to our union, you will be my bride—my own wife, will you not, angelic being?"

"Yes, dear Mortimer!" again murmured Rose, as she thought, "How divinely he talks!"

"One kiss!" pleaded Vic.

Their lips met.

At this moment the door slowly and cautiously opened a few inches, and a head was thrust in.

It was Jenny's.

"There!" she said to herself, as, unperceived, she saw that "helegant and howdacious young fellow, Mrs. Chester's cousin," as she reported to the cook, kissing her young mistress. "There! I could a-sworn it. Fine goings hon, miss. I'll keep my heye on both of 'em arter this. And I'll tell t'other Mr. St. John what's the clock. There's summat the matter with this ere key 'ole," and she looked at the lock as she gently closed the door. "I couldn't make hout just what they was hup to, cos my heye couldn't ketch the hangle right, as it were. It's hall howing to this ere nuisance of a key 'ole. What's the good of a key 'ole wot you carnt look through? This is some new hinvention or other, and like hall them sort of contraptions, tramples upon the rights of the working people."

She remained outside for a while and made the above

philosophical reflections with her eye glued to the unaccommodating key hole.

All unconscious of this espionage, Vic and Rose continued their love-making.

"When will you ask father's consent?"

"At once," replied Vic, and an arch smile dimpled her cheek, and a merry twinkle glistened in her eyes, as she said to herself:

"That was an easy conquest. What a little fool to yield so quickly. Why, I made Mortimer go nearly mad before I gave him the least sign of hope."

Rose looked up artlessly and confidingly into Vic's face, and said:

"And you are really Mortimer St. John? And didn't you know anything about this attempted villainy? Isn't it perfectly awful?"

"I'm really Mortimer St. John; and I didn't know anything about this attempted villainy; and it's perfectly awful."

Vic's conscience smote her as she uttered these falsehoods; she inwardly called them "three able-bodied whoppers;" but she pacified her scruples with the recollection of the well-worn aphorism, "All's fair in love and war."

"Only see, Rose," remarked Vic, "how the ways of the wicked work the good they never intended."

"Isn't it wonderful!" said Rose. A short pause. "O, I'm so anxious to make the acquaintance of your cousin, Mrs. Chester. I have not even seen her in the street, by chance, as yet."

"Have you not, indeed?" asked Vic. "I'm sure she'd be

delighted to know you, if only for my sake, for she knows how I love you. But don't get frightened when you *do* see her?"

"Why?"

"Because of her amazing likeness to me. If it were not for our apparel nobody would know us apart. You'd be dumbfounded if you saw us together. Now, Rose, I have some business to attend to down-town, so I shall leave you for a little while, but I'll stop in at my cousin's, Mrs. Chester, and tell her to come and visit you. Good-bye, sweet Rose, good-bye."

Vic kissed her adieu.

"Good-bye, you dear, delightful, naughty fellow," playfully said Rose; "I could eat you up."

Vic thought, "Before long, perhaps, she'll be wishing she had." Then she said aloud, "Bye, bye, Rose, I'll be off." And without more ado she left the apartment, covering her face with her handkerchief when she got into the hall, for fear of meeting St. John. She gained her own residence unobserved, and went directly to her own room, although she heard the voices of her aunt and Doctor Portley in the parlor.

VIII.

ST. JOHN DRAWS A CONCLUSION.

WHEN Rose was no longer under the spell of Vic's magnetic presence, she commenced to reflect upon what had occurred. In reality she felt piqued with herself for yielding up her affections so quickly and so unreservedly to the seductive solicitations of the youthful and beautiful stranger. Being a natural flirt, she experienced a flirt's vexation, because she did not make her lover sigh and pray at her feet in vain, while she enjoyed the adoration of her victim, whose hopeless cry would have been like ravishing music to her ears; and when the supposed lover would have been rendered nearly frantic with despairing passion, she would have made him suddenly happy with a soft, fond, responsive "Yes." Hence, she felt disappointed.

"Only think of me!" she said to herself, half aloud. "Here I am engaged to him before I have known him half a day. O, I'm ashamed of myself. I feel mortified. I'd like to quarrel with some one; I would."

Before she was aware of the fact, St. John had come into the room and approached her.

"O, here's that horrid Slippery Dick. I'll quarrel with him. O, I wish father would come. And I must treat him the same as before. And I must be very careful what I say."

These thoughts rushed rapidly through the giddy brain

of the light-headed Rose Portley as St. John came towards her with the self-contented tread of the man who feels that his affairs are progressing in a satisfactory manner.

St. John was in the best of spirits. He had been to Portley's banker with an order to transfer to his (St. John's) credit the snug sum of one hundred thousand dollars upon a certain date,—the day fixed upon for his marriage with Rose. Nothing was wanted now but the consummation of that event, which he looked upon as a matter of certainty in the near future.

"Well, Rose, my love, everything is going on finely. We'll soon be married," said St. John, assuming towards Rose a tender air; "and then you will be mistress of my purse as you are now mistress of my heart." And he muttered under his breath, "I'll give the poor thing a little sentiment. It's cheap, and a little goes a great way with them."

St. John's speech excited the risibilities of Rose, with the supposed facts relative to him, fresh in her mind.

"Your purse indeed," she exclaimed, laughing ironically. "Upon my word you make me laugh. Ha! ha! ha!"

"If I have said anything very comical," said St. John, nettled, "please tell me what it is."

"Comical?" laughed Rose, who never knew when to stop. "Ha! ha! You're *so* comical, Mr. *Mortimer St. John*"—pronouncing the name with scathing sarcasm. Giving vent to a loud, ironical laugh, she turned away from him, yet almost fearing she had gone too far.

"Well, I must say my matrimonial prospects *are* inviting," said St. John to himself, looking after Rose, who had gone

to one of the windows, out of which she appeared to be gazing. "Laughs in my face! And seems to be intensely amused about my name. But wait, my fine lady, until you are Mrs. Mortimer St. John. If I don't cure you of your tantrums, I shall deserve to suffer from them."

He became dimly conscious that a hand was mysteriously beckoning to him—a hand that was protruded between the lintel and the door, which was just sufficiently opened to admit the passage of that useful member of the human body. Then the door was opened still wider, and Jenny's face appeared.

"Hist! hist! Mr. St. John!" she said, in a suppressed whisper, looking cautiously in the direction where Rose stood.

St. John walked deliberately towards Jenny, and asked her, "Do you want me, Jenny?"

"Yes, sir, summat for your private hear. Quick!"

And Jenny beckoned him with immense energy out of the room.

"What shall I do?" mused Rose. "How shall I call father and Mortimer? I shudder at the very sight of him, the base imposter! O, I do so feel like calling him Slippery Dick or Tim Slapjack, just to see what he would say. I've two minds now to get Jenny to run in next door and tell father and Mortimer."

She turned irresolutely, and encountered the flushed and excited face of St. John, who had come in noiselessly, from his conference with Jenny.

"What's the meaning of this outrageous conduct?" he cried, in the harsh voice of suppressed passion. "And who

is that infamous scoundrel whom you permitted to kiss you? I understand he calls himself Mortimer St. John. He's an imposter, and if I can come across him I'll put a bullet through his worthless carcass, quick as wink."

Rose gasped, and throwing up her hands in helpless misery, involuntarily exclaimed, "Then you know all! He's no imposter. It's you're the imposter, and you've got the brazen impudence to call him one. O, I'm so frightened!" And she began to cry piteously.

"I'm the imposter! Have you taken leave of your senses, Rose? I have a right to question you as to your acquaintances, especially when I hear such shameful tales. Who is this villain? I *will* know."

He spoke in the loud, threatening tones of command, and his voice pierced Rose with terror.

"I'll show her," thought St. John, "that I'm not a man to be trifled with. I'll frighten her into confession; I'll let her know before we are married that I will not put up with such things."

Rose, deathly pale, stood before him trembling in every limb, and watching all his movements with intense anxiety and dread, inspired by the knowledge of his supposed antecedents, and the expectation of immediate mortal injury.

"Rose," bawled St. John, "if you don't confess I'll—I'll"—he put his hand into his pistol pocket—"I'll kill you instantly."

Seized with a paroxysm of fear, her teeth chattering, her face ghastly white, her eyes staring wildly, Rose fell on her knees before him, believing that her last hour had come.

"For heaven's sake," she screamed, "don't shoot. I'll tell

you all—everything. I won't keep back a thing. Only don't shoot. It's Mrs. Cousin's Chester—no, Mrs. Chester's cousin—the young widow, you know, sir, next door. Have mercy, have mercy on me. I'm so young. Don't kill me—don't kill me, good, nice Mr. Slippery Dick! Don't shoot, please don't, dear, dear Mr. Slapjack!”

St. John burst out laughing upon hearing himself addressed by these singular names, in shrieking tones.

“Mr. Slippery Dick! Mr. Slapjack!” he repeated. “Well, the poor girl *has* gone crazy. Rose, get up. I would not hurt you for the world. Compose yourself. She's in no fit condition to be questioned further.”

He assisted her to her feet and led her to a chair. She was half dead with fright. He poured out a glass of water from a pitcher that stood on the table, and gave it to her, and then opened the window-doors of the middle window to give her air, for the room was oppressively hot.

Rose looked at him closely, hardly knowing whether he had shot her yet, so dazed were her faculties.

“What a dreadful visitation,” thought St. John, as he eyed her from a little distance. “This accounts for her laughing in my face, and her strange actions. I must humor her a little. It is always best with those who are deranged in mind.”

Then he approached Rose and said, in a soothing tone, “So, Rose, I'm Mr. Slippery Dick and Mr. Slapjack, eh?”

“Yes,” replied Rose, thinking it was safer for her to make a clean breast of all she knew, “I know all about it: the meeting on the cars, playing cards with him, stealing his letters, and all the rest, you know.”

And as she uttered that comprehensive "you know," Rose gazed timidly into his face, and then at his hands, seeking, with her frightened glances, the dreaded revolver.

"Certainly, I know," responded St. John, humoring what he inferred were her delirious fancies. "So you know all that, do you?" And he said to himself, "Her mind is quite gone."

"It's all true, isn't it?" innocently asked Rose.

"Every word of it," said St. John, emphatically. "Every word of it, Rose."

"She seems quieter already," he muttered to himself.

"He acknowledges it, and so coolly," thought Rose. "What a villain!"

"I'll go and see if I can find your father, Rose. You stay here and keep quiet. I'll be back soon."

As he went to the door he reflected thus: "How shocking! I can't marry a mad woman, that's certain. Curse the luck. This frustrates all my plans. I'll see where Portley is, and have the marriage postponed. Perhaps, Rose may get over this attack." As he went out, he said, "Rose, I'll be back soon again."

Rose drew a long breath of relief when she heard the door close upon him. The tyranny of fear which had held all her faculties in its frozen grasp began to loose its hold, and she found relief in a flood of tears.

IX.

BEHIND THE WINDOW-CURTAINS.

As Rose dried her eyes, she was surprised to hear voices and laughter, and then footsteps on the balcony, in front of which she sat, at the open window.

Portley, Vic and Aunt Dolores now appeared on the balcony. Vic was in lady's attire, wearing a rich black silk, with a tastefully arranged overdress of white lace; a square white lace cape, caught at the neck with a large diamond brooch to match her solitaire diamond ear-rings completed her apparel. In the pride of her stately beauty she looked a queen of fashion and a most loveable woman.

Aunt Dolores was a dark-visaged lady of about forty, with a humorous twinkle in her black eyes. The remains of a youth of lustrous beauty, such as shone to perfection in the person of her niece, were still visible in her pleasant, well-favored countenance.

The party stepped at once into the room.

Portley presented Vic to Rose, saying, "My child, this is Mrs. Chester, our neighbor; Miss Jackson, her aunt," presenting Aunt Dolores. "My daughter Rose, ladies."

The ladies all bowed as their names were mentioned. Rose went to Vic and took both her hands in hers, saying, "O, Mrs. Chester, I'm enchanted to know you. Morti—that is, Mr. St. John—warned me not to be startled at the resemblance between you and him, but I am."

"Yes," said Portley, "I was perfectly thunderstruck by the likeness—it's wonderful."

"Well, I'm so glad you've come in so friendly and neighborly, and just now, too," said Rose.

"My niece suggested taking you by surprise and coming in by the balcony, thinking you surely had the window open this unseasonably warm day," observed Aunt Dolores. "Rather familiar, wasn't it?"

"Not at all," returned Rose; "I'm real glad."

"I thought I would not stand upon ceremony," here interposed Vic, "especially with one whom dear Mortimer esteems so highly. I have confided his secret to your father. He knows all that has taken place."

"Does he indeed?" said Rose, blushing. Again she looked curiously at Vic and noted the resemblance between the supposed cousins. "Even to the voice," she said to herself.

"Yes, Rose," said Portley, in his deep chest notes, "Mrs. Chester has communicated the glad tidings to me, and it is just like a romance. Yes, I have learnt about her manly and handsome cousin's infatuation, and I'm delighted with the news. Come, ladies, be seated."

He brought chairs and they all sat down. Rose then said, "O father, I've so much to tell you, and since Mrs. Chester has told you what has taken place between me and her cousin, I think I should not delay telling you. What do you think? He's been here and knows all."

"Who?" chorused Portley, Vic, and Aunt Dolores.

"Why, that desperado, Slippery Dick," answered Rose.

"He knows all?" echoed Vic, in dismay.

"What?" demanded Portley, excited. "Do you mean

that he knows that the true St. John has been here, and that we have found out that *he* is a fraud ? ’

“ Yes, that’s just it,” replies Rose, trembling with excitement, while Vic turns deathly pale and exchanges significant glances with her aunt. “ And would you believe it, Mrs. Chester,” addressing Vic, who is bewildered more and more as she listens, “ he coolly acknowledged the theft of your cousin’s letters, and threatened to kill me besides.”

Vic looked at her in a helpless way. “ Is she mad or am I ? ” was the question that forced itself into her brain.

“ He deliberately took out a revolver,” continued Rose, whose fears had caused her to see things that existed only in her morbidly active imagination, “ and pointed it at my head—so.”

She doubled her fist, and sighted her thumb at Vic’s temple, pistol-wise.

An expression of horror escaped from all. Vic could not understand what it meant ; she was, indeed, non-plussed.

“ You say he knows all ? ” pursued Vic, hoping by questioning Rose to probe the mystery. “ Do you mean —— ? ”

“ Yes, I do,” quickly interrupted Rose. “ Without the least hesitation, he owned that he was Slippery Dick, alias Tim Slapjack.”

Vic and Aunt Dolores looked at each other, and they seemed to mutually ask the questions, “ Can you understand it ? Is this girl a lunatic ? St. John could not have said anything of the kind.”

Portley listened in an attitude of deep thought, and seemed liable to break out into a speech at any moment.

“ He also said that he met your cousin Mortimer on the

cars," continued Rose to Vic's increased amazement. "And purloined his letters of introduction, by which he was enabled to pass himself off as Mortimer St. John. He told all this to me in as quiet a tone as though he were ordering breakfast."

"What can this mean?" mentally queried Vic, perplexed beyond expression.

"He told this to you, Miss Portley?" she again questioned Rose.

"Yes, just as I tell you," positively affirmed Rose.

Vic and Aunt Dolores exchanged blank, hopeless glances.

"The villain!" now bursts from Portley's stentorian throat. "I wish you hadn't said anything to him, Rose. Now, he'll escape the fate he richly merits, unless Philpot can track him. Of course, knowing now that his imposture is discovered, he will never show his face again in New York. I wish I had seen your cousin, Mrs. Chester, before he went down town, so that we might have concerted measures for the apprehension of this fellow. I wanted to arrest him at once, but I was dissuaded from doing so by Philpot, and by Mr. St. John. Everything goes wrong when I don't carry out my own ideas."

"I really wish you had seen him, sir," remarked Vic, quite at a loss, and looking appealingly at Aunt Dolores, as much as to say, "Can't you think of something to help me out?" And then she added:

"Yes, Doctor, Mortimer is greatly incensed against this scamp."

"I heard my nephew, Mortimer, say," Aunt Dolores now addressed the Doctor, "that he would give a thousand dollars to meet this villain face to face."

Portley gazed steadily at Aunt Dolores, and made the mental observation, "Devilish fine woman."

Vic and Rose retired to a sofa on the opposite side of the room, and conferred in low voices, Vic endeavoring to extract what she could from Rose as to the interview that she had had with St. John, in the hopes of getting some intelligence that would tend to allay her perplexity and explain the mystery.

"I've no doubt whatever, madam, that your nephew would give the sum you named," replied Portley, in answer to Aunt Dolores' observation, "to meet the scoundrel who has been personating him. I would give another thousand to see him safe in quod. Now, my dear madam," continued Portley, rolling his voice and throwing his chest forward, as he always did when he began a harangue, his left thumb in the arm-hole of his vest; his right hand used in graceful and appropriate gestures. "In my humble opinion,—well, it is only an opinion—a thing of this kind—of this infamous nature, could never have occurred—in fact, could never have happened,—if my excellent Preparations, which have a world-wide reputation, had been properly placed before the public on the Pacific Coast. I say, of course, that this is only an opinion. But it's *my opinion*, and I believe it from the very bottom of my heart. I refer, madam, to my Preservative Pills, Powders, Pellets and Potions, sovereign remedies and never-failing specifics for the unconditional reconstruction and immediate restoration of the wasted vital energies. For, don't you see, madam, the moral fibre of our being is closely related to our physical organism, and my theory is this: If you put force and

vigor and tension into the material organization, you establish a firm basis for the expansive growth and play of the moral faculties. That's my theory, and that's what my Preservative Preparations practically accomplish. But how? you naturally ask. I will answer your question: By removing the obstructions of the internal organs. By stimulating them into healthy action. By renovating the fountains of life and vigor. Then health courses anew through the body, and gladness takes the place of gloom. *This*—THIS is the perfection of medicine. And this is what my Preservative Preparations are doing, day in and day out. See yon man, tottering and bent double with bilious complaint," and Portley pointed with pity and disgust to an imaginary wretch in the corner. "Give him these wonderful Preparations of mine and mark the effect. See him straighten with strength. See his long-lost appetite return. See his clammy features blossom into health. Look at her who was once radiant with health and loveliness, now blasted and too early withering away"—again he pointed with relentless forefinger to a miserable specimen of a wretched female, whom he saw in his mind's eye, cowering in the opposite corner. "Her blood is vitiated—her health is gone. She was once the light of the household. She is now an aching lump of animated anguish. Give her these Preservative Preparations. Now look again"—directing the gaze of his auditor into the same corner. "The roses blossom on her cheeks, and where lately pain and sorrow sat and held high carnival, joy and delight burst from every rosy feature. Is it nothing to do these things, madam? Nay, are they not the marvels of this, our age, so filled with the incredible wonders of

science? And yet they are done around you every day by the use of Doctor Philander Potter Portley's Preservative Pills, Powders, Pellets and Potions. I trust I have made myself understood, madam?"

"Perfectly so, sir," replied Aunt Dolores, who had been wondering if he would ever cease talking. "I've often used them myself. But I should like to ask your daughter how this imposter left her." She called over to Rose, "Miss Portley, what did that person say when he went away?"

Rose came over to Aunt Dolores, accompanied by Vic, whose long cross-questioning had only served to deepen the mystery she was bent on solving.

"What did he say?" Thus Rose, reflectively. "Let me try to remember? O, yes, his last words as he went out, were, 'I will be back soon again.'"

"He said that he would be back?" exclaimed Portley. "The devil! Why didn't you say so?"

"What?" cried Vic, violently excited but retaining her self-possession. "Back here?"

"Yes, back here!" answered Rose.

"We shall have to bid you good day, Doctor," said Vic, pulling Aunt Dolores by the dress.

"You are not going so soon?" said Portley and Rose in a breath.

"O yes, we must," returned the astute aunt. "We want to watch for Mortimer, and tell him that Slippery Dick is expected here. I'm going to make that thousand dollars which he vowed he would give if he could meet him face to face." Then turning to Vic, with a roguish smile, she said, "Mind you, I'll be the first to tell him that Mr. Tim Slapjack is to be found here."

"I think it's mean, aunty," replied Vic in the same strain, "to take all the money yourself. You ought to go halves with me."

"Well, we'll share the spoils," said Aunt Dolores, with a good-natured smile.

At this juncture Jenny opened the door, and made the momentous announcement,

"Mr. St. John's waiting to see you, Doctor, and wants to know hif you'll see 'im 'ere?"

Vic paled and shook. She glanced at Aunt Dolores, as much as to say, "What's to be done?"

"Perhaps this is your cousin?" said Portley to Vic.

"It's more likely to be that horrid Slippery Dick," replied Vic. "I should faint if I saw him."

"So should I," chimed in Aunt Dolores. "You'll excuse us if we take our leave by the way we came?" pointing to the balcony.

"Certainly, if you so desire," acquiesced Portley. "I won't press you to stay if you think it is Slippery Dick. Ask that gentleman in, Jenny."

The last-named person had been standing at the door, swallowing with avidity every word, but with an expression on her face of almost stupid indifference, which she would, doubtless, have asserted was the result of the teachings of the defunct lady whom she was never tired of calling her "blessed benefactress." She now went to do her master's bidding, with the muttered remark, "Vell, this is the rum-mest go I hever 'eard on."

Vic and Aunt Dolores bid Portley and Rose a hasty adieu, and made their exit by the balcony.

As they were stepping over the low iron railing that separated the Portley premises from their own, a thought occurred to Vic, which she immediately communicated to Aunt Dolores.

"Suppose we return and conceal ourselves behind the curtains. I'm so anxious to see what will occur to poor Mortimer."

She peeped through the window to ascertain if there was any chance of carrying out her idea. Portley and Rose were looking in the direction of the door, evidently awaiting the coming of the person Jenny had announced.

"We can now step in unobserved," urged Vic.

"Very well, I'll risk it if you will," said Aunt Dolores.

Aunt and niece were well matched in the possession of a daring and adventurous spirit.

In less time than it takes to tell it, they were both back again in the apartment whence they had emerged, having silently returned without being seen by either Rose or the Doctor. They stood, one on each side of the large middle window, concealed from view by the ample folds of the window curtains.

X.

VIC'S HEROIC DEED.

BARELY had Vic and Aunt Dolores slipped out of sight behind the curtains, when St. John came in, the door being thrown open by Jenny, who closed it again and retired.

Upon seeing who had entered, Portley worked himself into a passion, but still retained sufficient self-control to act upon the prudence of shielding himself from the chance of a playful bullet that so desperate a character as the man who stood before him might direct into the vicinity of some vital organ of his precious anatomy. He, therefore, with marvellous foresight, placed the agitated Rose in front of him, as a living barricade, and whispered in her ear:

"And now, stand near to me, Rose. I'll protect you with my life. At the least sign of violence on his part, scream, yell, howl murder at the top of your lungs. Watch his hands. Should he put one behind him to draw his revolver, shriek at once. But always stand by your devoted parent."

Poor Rose, limp in mute terror, was held by her "devoted parent" directly in front of his person, while he looked over her shoulder at St. John, who gazed in astonishment at the singular position of the renowned Doctor Portley and his daughter.

"Why does he hold her so?" thought St. John. "She

must have had another violent fit ! An insane wife ! No money could induce me."

"Well, sir—ahem ! ahem !" Portley glared at him from behind his daughter's shoulder, and cleared his throat fiercely as he peeped over.

"Sir," began St. John, "I have made a most distressing discovery."

"Have you, indeed ?" sarcastically returned Portley, protected by his human parapet. "So have I !"

"Ah ! Then you have detected it. Just as I thought."

"Yes, sir ; I have detected what I little suspected," exclaimed Portley, in a passion.

"It's very sad, very sad," coolly observed St. John, who took good and bad fortune with equal indifference. "You know, sir, how anxious I have always been to unite myself to your family, but really, I'm compelled to break off the match—at least, for the present. You couldn't expect me to marry your daughter under the circumstances !"

This was too much for Portley. In his eyes, St. John was mocking him—adding ridicule and insult to his previous deception. Portley burst out into a storm of rage. His fear of personal harm departed. He came out from behind Rose and shook his fist in St. John's face, all the blood in his body, seemingly, centering in his fiery visage framed by his silvery whiskers.

"*You're* compelled ! And *I* couldn't expect you," he fairly bellowed. "Well, I've heard of cool things—but this is positively refrigerating ; it's way below zero. Damn your cheek, sir ! You come here under false pretences, give yourself out as an immensely rich man, ingratiate yourself into

our good opinion, and engage yourself to my daughter; and then, when we are posted as to your true character, you have the sublime cheek—yes, sir, cheek—to break off the match before I have had time to give you your walking ticket. Leave this house instantly. Never show your face here again. All your movements are known and watched. You are a marked man—a doomed man, Mr. Tim Slapjack! Ah! You start and turn pale! You thought, Mr. Slippery Dick,—ah! you start again—you—a person such as you—thought to hoodwink me—a Portley. Fatal error. Learn, sir, learn that an inferior can never long impose on a superior. A Portley can never be deceived by a Slapjack. Go, Slippery Dick, go.”

Portley pointed to the door, the very embodiment of eloquent and outraged virtue lashed into righteous wrath, brimming with scorn, indignation and defiance.

St. John was utterly bewildered. He had indeed started and paled when Portley fiercely hurled at him those low and offensive names, which the doctor supposed were his true appellations.

“Slippery Dick! Slapjack!” said St. John to himself. “The names that Rose called me! What can it mean?”

“Doctor Portley,” he said, “I am quite unable to comprehend, sir——”

“Not a word—not a word,” bawled Portley. “Don’t attempt an explanation—don’t attempt the impossible.”

St. John gazed at him for an instant in silence, his blonde face flushed, his blue eyes kindling with passion, his whole bearing betokening the sense of outrage which he felt.

The doctor stood a short distance from him, nearly in the

centre of the room, his fiery countenance aflame, and with commanding finger pointing to the door leading to the hall. Rose cowered behind her father, white and trembling.

Vic and Aunt Dolores watched the proceedings from their place of concealment with intense interest and increasing anxiety.

As the last word uttered by the doctor fell from his lips, the wide sliding-doors that separated the parlor from the extension-room were rolled suddenly back, and a tall, slim young man, with a pale blue cravat, and a ghastly pale and hideously convulsed countenance, rushed in and made directly towards St. John, levelling a revolver at his head, and crying, "I've got you now, and I'll shoot you down like a dog."

It was Edmond Lee.

He had been lying in wait for St. John, and at this instant he had finally screwed up his courage to commit the deed which his frenzied brain had conceived.

The sudden apparition of Edmond, with the levelled, gleaming revolver in his hand, paralyzed, with shuddering terror and breathless excitement, all present except one person.

That person was Vic.

With sublime courage and unexampled quickness of thought and deed, she came from behind the curtains, and dashed forward, placing herself between St. John and his assailant, and with a violent blow struck the weapon from his hand. It went off as it fell to the floor, the sharp report ringing through the house.

The doctor, Rose, Aunt Dolores, Edmond Lee, and St.

John were held spell-bound, by Vic's sudden appearance and her heroic act. Not a word had been uttered by any one. And only as the revolver fell, did St. John cry, in an amazed tone, "Vic!"

The spell was broken.

There then took place a scene of indescribable excitement and confusion. The doctor rushed upon Edmond to secure him, exclaiming in thunder-tones, "He is mad—stark, staring, raving mad. Give him a Pill, a Powder, a Pellet and a Potion. Help me! Help me!"

St. John's first impulse was to seize his antagonist, but he was still under the influence of surprise caused by the unexpected presence, and the magnificent self-sacrificing courage of the beautiful woman whom in his heart he still adored. The doctor's call for aid aroused him, and he ran to assist him in overpowering Edmond, who was struggling with the doctor. The crazed young man, finding himself roughly grasped by his hated foe and successful rival, doubled his fist, and summoning his whole strength, planted such a powerful blow under St. John's chin that he was actually lifted from his feet. Finding himself so foully used, St. John lost all control over his temper, and uttering fearful imprecations, pommelled his adversary right and left, following up one blow after the other. Rose screamed in terror. Portley, holding aloft a box of Preservative Preparations, bellowed, "Don't strike him. He's mad! Force open his mouth. Let me give him a Pill, a Powder, a Pellet and a Potion!"

The servants, headed by Jenny, came pouring in, wildly excited.

Amid the confusion, Vic and Aunt Dolores, perceived by no one, ran out upon the balcony, and thence into their own house.

BOOK III.
IN VIC'S HOUSE.

BOOK III.—IN VIC'S HOUSE.

I.

ST. JOHN MAKES A DISCOVERY.

It is ten o'clock the following morning.

Mortimer St. John and Gil Fernandez were seated in Vic's extension-room, or back parlor, corresponding with the apartment with which the former was so familiar in the house adjoining. St. John holds his hat in one gloved hand, and a cane in the other. His countenance wears a look of care and anxiety, as though his mind is oppressed with the burden of an unsolved problem.

He gazes round the elegantly and tastefully furnished apartment, as he converses with Gil, and mentally compares the appointments and fittings with its counterpart in Doctor Portley's house, and decides that this room is handsomer, because the furniture is simpler, and all the colors are softly blended. The prevailing tint is an exquisite pale blue.

After the usual greetings, St. John opens the conversation.

"I received a note from Mr. Philpot," he began, "requesting me to call at this house, saying that he had important intelligence to communicate to me. Does he live here?"

"Well, yes," returned Gil, slowly, as he poured a stream of smoke through his nostrils; he was smoking a cigarette. "That is, he has been living here since yesterday only, and merely for professional purposes."

Then he winked knowingly at St. John, and added confidentially, "This is a very select boarding-house. Within a day or two, Mr. Philpot got news about your matter, sir, that caused him to come and board at this house and work up the case himself."

"But why at this house?"

"I would prefer to let Mr. Philpot tell you that himself, sir."

"I intended to call this morning at Mr. Philpot's office," remarked St. John, "but last evening his note was left at my residence, requesting me to meet him here."

"Yes, sir; Mr. Philpot sent me with the note," answered Gil. He muttered to himself, "What a grand piece of luck he didn't go down to Philpot's. How right I was in divining that that would be the first thing he would think of, and hence insisted upon Vic seeing him again as Philpot."

Here Vic came in, dressed as Philpot, presenting the same eccentric figure, and the same mass of gray beard and hair, and wearing the identical blue glasses. The long, dark frock coat was buttoned to the neck, the coat-tails descended below the knees, whereby Vic's clever device of having boots with the tops encased in the leggings of a pair of old pants, gave her the appearance of being in pantaloons, as her skirts were pinned up above the coat-tails.

"Good morning, Mr. St. John!" she said in the squeak she had before adopted to disguise her voice.

St. John returned her bow, and said, "Good morning, sir!"

Motioning him to a seat on the sofa, and sitting beside him, she said, "I preferred to see you here rather than at

the office, for reasons not necessary to mention now. The fact is, I was by no means satisfied with the manner in which my men were conducting the search for that young lady, so I concluded to take the matter into my own hands. At last I have struck the right scent. I came yesterday and engaged board in this house solely in your interest."

"How in my interest?" asked St. John, sharply.

"That lady, Miss Fernandez, *is* in New York."

"I know that."

"You do?" in a well-feigned tone of surprise. "But, perhaps, you don't know she's in this house?"

St. John started and gazed at Vic in genuine astonishment.

"In this house?"

"Why, that's why I'm here."

"Ah! I begin to understand," said St. John. "She's boarding here, and you've come to board in the same house with her?"

Vic nodded with a knowing air, and turning to Gil, she said, "You had better watch at the stairs and warn us in case she should come in here." Gil left the room. "Of course, you don't want to meet her until after your marriage to Miss Portley!"

St. John made a movement of disgust, as he observed, "Gone up! The match is off."

"The match off!" exclaimed Vic, again in the simulated tones of surprise.

"She's a lunatic!" explained St. John. "I wanted the money badly, but I don't want a lunatic for a wife at any price."

"What do you mean by saying she's a lunatic?" queried Vic.

"Why, she called me such peculiar names—'Slippery Dick' and 'Tim Slapjack,' and told me some incomprehensible rigmarole about meeting somebody on the cars and cribbing his letters. She went off into a lot of brain-sick fancies. Of course, I agreed with her in everything. It's always the best thing to do with the insane."

"So! so!" Vic said to herself. "That puzzle is explained."

"I've been trying to get something through my brain," said St. John, "ever since you told me that Miss Fernandez lives in this house."

"What's that?" inquired Vic.

"There's a balcony here, isn't there?" asked St. John, rising, and going to the middle window, built precisely the same as in Portley's house. He opened one of the window-doors, looked out on the balcony, came back into the room, closed the door—but without locking it,—and emphatically exclaimed, "That's it! That's the way she came! Sure pop!"

Vic had preserved an aspect of perfect indifference, but knew very well what was passing in his mind. She now asked, "That's what? And that's the way who came? And what's a sure pop?"

"Why, Vic,—that's Miss Fernandez. But you must first understand that Doctor Portley lives next door," pointing.

"What! You don't mean your Doctor Portley?" queried Vic, in the high treble of surprise.

"Yes, the same," returned St. John. He continued:

"Well, yesterday afternoon, I was attacked in their back parlor, situated just as this room is, by a jealous and in-

furiated lover of Rose Portley's, who is the doctor's private secretary, Edmond Lee by name. The fellow came in, revolver in hand, and drew a bead on me. I was talking with the doctor, who had insulted me most grossly, and had used language which caused me to believe that he was suffering from the same lunacy that affected his daughter. At the very moment that I was burning with rage, in rushed this fellow, levelling his revolver at my head. But I was saved by a most wonderful interposition; for Vic—great and glorious Vic Fernandez—as though she had dropped from the skies for the special purpose of protecting me from harm, stood between me and death, and with one vigorous blow, struck the deadly weapon from the hand of the would-be assassin. If it had not fallen to the floor, where it went off, she would have been killed. Noble creature! And that's the woman, sir, that I basely deserted—deserted the woman who yet loves me so well that she has followed me here to New York, and in the most unaccountable manner, saves me from danger at the risk of her own life."

His voice trembled with emotion, and his ill-suppressed agitation revealed a depth of feeling which filled Vic with the intoxicating sense of revived hope in the prospect of a near renewal of his passionate love for her. By a strong effort she controlled all outward manifestation of her feelings, and maintained an appearance of amazed attention.

St. John added, "It was a mystery to me how she came there."

"What became of this extraordinary young female?" asked Vic.

"I could n't make out what became of her," answered St.

John. "A struggle ensued to secure young Lee,—that's the lover,—and lock him up in his room. I helped to overpower him. We had a fight. He attacked me. I pitched into him. There was great noise and confusion. When I came to look around for Vic, she had disappeared. I watched the house the whole night without seeing her come out. I did not ask either Rose or the doctor how she came there, for we parted in anger, breaking off the match mutually. But now I am convinced, since I learned she lives in this house, that she came and went by the way of this balcony."

"I should not be a bit surprised," observed Vic; a short pause—then, "What do you propose to do now?"

St. John was silent. His fine blonde countenance wore a troubled air. Finally he said, "Instead of avoiding this young lady, I am anxious to meet her, if I but knew she would see me after what has happened. In some way or other, she must know of my connection with the Portleys. Now, Mr. Philpot, if you can bring about an interview between Miss Fernandez and myself, I shall not only be extremely grateful to you, but will pay you well and try to make up in some way the disappointment you will experience in not getting pay for the note I gave you."

"What is your object in meeting this young lady—this mysterious female?"

St. John observes that the old detective is taken with a troublesome fit of asthmatic coughing.

"I want to thank her and to ask pardon," St. John answered, with a slight tremor in his voice, so slight as to be hardly noticeable, "and beg upon my knees to be received by her again as a friend, and perhaps—perhaps——"

He did not finish the sentence. He covered his face with his hands and seemed absorbed in thought.

If St. John had then been looking at the party with whom he was conversing, he could not have helped noticing the remarkable spectacle of a detective in tears—for he would have seen large tear-drops chase each other from under the blue glasses and lose themselves in the thick forest of gray beard that hid the cheeks of the odd-looking old gentleman sitting beside him. Fortunately, however, St. John was too much overcome with his own emotion to note these treacherous manifestations, and Vic had time to hastily dry her eyes, in time to prevent discovery.

"Well, sir," she said, as St. John looked up, "if that is your idea, if you are really desirous of meeting Miss Fernandez, I think I can arrange the matter for you very easily. I have told you that this is a boarding-house, and that she is boarding here. Now, why not come and take a room in this very house? It will appear as though you came here by accident, don't you see? And then—and then——"

St. John wonders why the old gentleman's voice becomes suddenly so thick and obstructed.

"I'll do it," he exclaims, enchanted with the plan. "Let your young man secure me a room. I'll fix up matters between us one of these days, Mr. Philpot, and try and make everything square."

"That's all right," answered Vic. "Don't let that trouble you. The room will be secured at once. When do you propose coming?"

"To-day, if I was certain of having a room," replied St. John.

"I know there are plenty of rooms vacant in this house," rejoined Vic. "You may rest satisfied in the certainty that if you come, you will find a welcome reception."

"In that case I will go home, pack up and come here at once, relying upon you to fix the rest."

With these words St. John rose and took his leave, saying that he would return with his baggage in the course of a couple of hours.

II.

PORTLEY'S SUSPICIONS AROUSED.

No sooner had St. John departed, when Vic gave way to the pent up joy that swelled her bosom. She tore off the wig and beard and dropped them behind a sofa, and took the blue glasses and put them in one of the pockets of the coat. She walked up and down briskly, clapping her hands in transports of delight. The palms met above her head in electric concussion, and a succession of quick sharp reports broke the stillness. She then threw herself on the sofa, weeping as though her heart would break, in which condition Aunt Dolores and Gil found her, when they came in shortly after the departure of St. John.

"Well, Vic, I declare," exclaimed her aunt; "is this heroic Vic?"

"Aunt, I was so enraptured with the way all our plans were working," answered Vic, drying her eyes and gradually recovering her self-possession, "and especially with the

near approach of Mortimer's renewed love, that I was overcome with joy and gratitude. Many times while talking with him, I felt like tearing off my disguise and confessing how I have been tricking him. He's quite ready to return to his old love, aunty, and this I owe to you."

"Not at all, my dear. You owe it to your ability to be manly and wear pants," returned Aunt Dolores, jocosely. "It's only another illustration of the truth of my theory, that pants are good for women as well as men—that is, provided a woman can wear them with pleasure and profit to herself, and the advancement of the human race. Look at the results! They clearly show the strength, truth and solidity of my doctrines."

"But what will Doctor Portley say?" here demanded Gil, with a doubtful shake of the head, "when he finds that he has been fooled? He'll certainly be enraged, and might, perhaps, take the law against us. Then Vic would stand a good chance of being sent to the penitentiary for appearing in male attire. And if old Philpot should get wind that she has been personating him, there's no knowing what would happen. I knew St. John would want to go at once and see Philpot; that's the reason why I got Vic to see him here as Philpot, and get up the story about this being a boarding-house. But as I say, if Portley has us arrested, and Philpot learns that Vic has been personating him, I shall lose my place, and Vic would be in a pretty pickle. But it would only be another very convincing proof of the strength, truth and solidity of aunty's doctrines."

And Gil's handsome face wore an expression of biting sarcasm as he uttered the ironical affirmation.

Vic listened to Gil's prognostications with evident alarm, and she turned her pale and anxious face to Aunt Dolores in mute inquiry. That lady appeared fully equal to the task of combatting Gil's discouraging view of things.

"Pooh! Pooh!" she exclaimed. "You, Gil, are an alarmist and a constitutional doubter, like all your sex. The frightful picture you have drawn exists only in your imagination. As to Philpot hearing that Vic has been personating him, there is no possible way that he can learn the fact, because it is known to us only; therefore, I dismiss that apprehension as one that we need not trouble ourselves about. With regard to Doctor Portley finding out that Vic has been trifling with him, there, I admit that there is danger of getting into trouble. But, Vic, he must *not* find out that you have been acting a part to deceive him and Rose."

"How can it be prevented from coming to his knowledge?" asked Vic.

Aunt Dolores reflected for a few moments, and then said, with a roguish twinkle in her eyes, "With the natural fickleness of the sex, which, I am glad to say, you have only been *pretending* to belong to, Vic, you will have to break off the match with Rose Portley, that you have just made with her, as Mortimer St. John. By a series of ingenious devices and impersonations, you have succeeded in breaking up St. John's connection with the Portleys, and you are now certain of winning him back. You will now have to cover up your tracks by similar means."

"But how is the match with Rose Portley to be broken off, aunty?"

"By the simple and characteristic means which men never hesitate to adopt:—Make love and engage yourself, as Mortimer St. John, to another woman," was the reply.

"Another woman?" echoed Vic. "What other woman?"

"Your cousin, Mrs. Chester," laughed Aunt Dolores. "When Rose and the Doctor learn that the true St. John is false, they'll, of course, make a row; but that will be the end of it. They will cut us—just what we want—and then they will look out for the next best match for Rose. Perhaps fall back on Edmond Lee. Let me engineer this for you, Vic. I'll get you out of this scrape."

"Well, what's to be done first, aunty?" asked Vic, yielding herself to her aunt's guidance, fully satisfied that she had matured a plan to overcome the difficulty.

"Go and attire yourself again as Mortimer St. John—the spirited, dashing, and seductively beautiful youth—and come here. Rose and the doctor will be certain to pay your cousin, Mrs. Chester, a visit this morning after the occurrence of yesterday afternoon. Stop! I hear voices now in the hall; sure enough—there they are! The girl will show them into this room, certain. Go through the sliding doors into the parlor, Vic. You can then get up stairs without being seen after they have come in here."

As she spoke, footsteps were heard in the hall, and as Vic pushed back one of the sliding doors and vanished into the parlor, Doctor Portley and his daughter entered the room from the door on the side leading from the hall, preceded by the servant girl who threw open the door. A glance from Vic had told Gil that he, likewise, should not be seen by Portley. But poor Gil was too late to make his exit by

the same means as did Vic, without running the risk of being seen by Portley; so he ensconced himself behind a large arm-chair near the door, with the intention of making his escape, as soon as the visitors' backs were turned.

"Good morning, Doctor. Good morning, Miss Portley," said Aunt Dolores, with a sunny smile and an air of neighborly interest.

"Good morning—good morning," answered Rose and Portley. And then the latter bungled over his excuses for making such an early visit. Rose came to his rescue by asking, "How's Mrs. Chester?"

Now the fact was, that Portley was in a quandary. He was unable to settle upon any theory to explain the strange and exciting presence of Vic in the very nick of time to save St. John from Edmond Lee's bullet. His suspicions had begun to be aroused that he was the victim of some deep-laid conspiracy—how or for what purpose he could not as yet determine. Being himself a man of low cunning, contracted intellect and debased moral aims, he attributed all the unaccountable acts of men, either to their remarkable ignorance, or their equally remarkable wickedness. These were the only phases of human nature with which he had any intimate acquaintance, and in his map of man, they naturally held central and wide-embracing positions, like China in a Chinese map of the world, to the exclusion of all other unexplored or unknown territory.

His visit this morning was intended as "a feeler,"—to use his own expression—in order to ascertain if anything could be learned upon which to base an opinion in regard to the undefined suspicions which had entered his mind.

III.

PORTLEY MAKES AN ARREST.

"AH! my poor niece, Mrs. Chester," Aunt Dolores answered to Rose's interrogation, as she motioned her visitors to seats. "She's not at all well. Hasn't quite gotten over the excitement of yesterday afternoon. You must understand," she continued, after pausing a moment, reflecting that some reason must be given for the sudden appearance of Vic and herself, and their equally sudden withdrawal at the time and place referred to, "that we were attracted by the loud talking in your back parlor, and fearing that that Slippery Dick would commit some violent deed, we ventured to look in. At that moment, the desperate young man with the revolver, rushed into the room; then it was that my niece, Mrs. Chester—all impulse, noble, brave and good, as she is—sought to protect from bodily injury, even that vile character, Slippery Dick. That's her nature. She can't see a fly suffer. She was too much overcome to stay and explain. And I felt it my duty to follow and tend on her."

She flattered herself she had smoothed over one rough spot, at least, though she was bound mentally to confess that the story was a little "fishy."

Portley had listened to her with attention, and seemed satisfied. He was anxious to see his intended son-in-law, and clench matters between him and Rose. With all his

cunning and penetration, he never doubted but that Vic was really Mortimer St. John, and that Rose was the object of his affection. And he thought thus, simply because it coincided with his hopes and wishes.

"Well, I shall not have to change the order that I have given to my banker, after all. But the marriage will have to be fixed upon at the date already arranged, or I will have to alter the date upon which the banker had orders to transfer the hundred thousand dollars to the credit of Mortimer St. John."

It was thus he reflected on the subject.

When Aunt Dolores had concluded her explanation, Portley said, "Well, do you know I fancied something of the kind." In reality, he was unable to imagine any reason for Vic's appearance. "And I came with Rose to get at the rights of it. And I also earnestly desire to see your nephew, Mr. St. John. There are some preliminaries upon which we must settle."

"I expect him here every moment," answered Aunt Dolores.

"Well, then, we will wait," returned Portley, rising and setting himself in trim for a speech, to the no little dismay of Aunt Dolores, who was watching, with some anxiety for an opportunity for Gil to run out of the room. Gil had been the whole time on the alert, but had sagely concluded to remain where he was, rather than risk being observed in going out. As he could not see the doctor, he did not share the alarm of Aunt Dolores, when Portley walked deliberately to the arm-chair and back again, talking in his usual manner of speechifying, as he walked to and fro.

“In view, madam, of the intimate relationship that is about to spring up—arise, I may say—between our respective families”—nodding suggestively towards Rose—“I have been puzzling my brain how best to benefit the young couple, and my cogitations have ultimated thus: I have determined to give to your nephew as soon as the hymeneal knot is tied, an entirely new and unworked territory for the manufacture and sale of my Preservative Preparations, besides, that is, in addition to, the Pacific Coast. This new territory to which I refer, is no other than all the Russias—think of that! I give him all the Russias. As the Czar is the ruler of all the Russias, so he will have control over all the Russias for the manufacture and sale of Doctor Philander Potter Portley’s Preservative Pills, Powders, Pellets and Potions. So let him begin at once with the study of the Russian language, in order that he may get up proper advertisements under his personal supervision—for it cannot be too strongly impressed on his mind that the measure of success in this beneficent business depends solely upon and is in proportion to the amount of advertising. I can put my hand on my heart, madam, and conscientiously say, that I never lost an opportunity to make known the existence of these truly wonderful Preservative Preparations—the most important medical discoveries of this or any other age;—golden discoveries more precious than rubies and diamonds. Now about acquiring the Russian language. It’s quite easy. It consists of sneezing and coughing in about equal parts, for instance like the simple word ‘Ah-chee-tsi-koff,’”—pronouncing it with a combined sneeze and cough. “You see yourself, it’s quite easy, especially if one is subject to the hay fever.

You must know I had a shie at the language myself once, but I gave it up, owing to the extreme difficulty I experienced in getting and retaining, for any length of time, a chronic cold in the head, so requisite for its fluent and correct pronunciation. Well, that's my view of the matter. Why, talking about advertising, madam, it was I who started the once celebrated "Sands of Life," paragraph, which appeared in almost every newspaper in the United States. Yes, indeed, madam, I am the physician whose sands of life had nearly run out some thirty odd years ago, but luckily before they all skedaddled, I was enabled to catch and retain a few of the vital grains, upon which I have sustained existence ever since, with the aid of three substantial meals a day, and *quan. suff.* of pure wine; and the medical blessings foreshadowed in that historical paragraph were no other than my Preservative Preparations."

At the conclusion of this lengthy harangue, Portley sat down in the arm-chair, with a heavy thump, giving that piece of furniture the full benefit of his solid two hundred pounds avoirdupois. Now, as the arm-chair was upon rollers, the sudden accession of the doctor's weight as he threw himself back, caused one of the rollers to move backwards a little and on to Gil's soft corn, his foot being directly against the roller.

It was more than human nature could endure.

Gil hastily shoved the arm-chair from the vicinity of his tender pet, and involuntarily emitted a suppressed groan, terminating in a squeal.

The doctor, Aunt Dolores and Rose started to their feet. "Hilloo! What's that?" cried Portley.

"Nothing," said Aunt Dolores. "I think it's a rat in the wall."

"Yes, I smell one," exclaimed Portley, wheeling away the arm-chair and disclosing Gil.

"Oh, it's a man," screamed Rose.

Aunt Dolores was equal to the occasion. Assuming an air of mingled fright and indignation, she approached Gil and exclaimed, "Oh, you bold, base, bad young man! What are you doing in this house? How came you here? I shall faint, Doctor, I know I shall."

She placed her fingers carelessly on her lips to signify to Gil that he was to be silent.

The doctor, as a friend and neighbor, felt called upon to act in the emergency with decision and courage. He thought to himself, "This affair will get into the papers, and it will be a first-class advertisement for Portley's Preservative Preparations."

He therefore rushed upon the wretched Gil with unexampled ferocity, and seizing him by the coat collar, dragged him to the middle of the room, crying in loud, metallic tones, "You bold wretch! Mid-day burglar! You sneak-thief! Unscrupulous and crime-hardened youth, on whose brow the vestiges of sin are plainly visible! Give an account of yourself. Disgorge the horrid tale of guilt! Speak!"

He gave poor Gil a vicious shake. Admonished, however, by a warning look from Aunt Dolores, he kept silent and submitted.

"Ah! I'll wager my life, young man," said Portley, tightening his hold upon Gil, "I'll wager my life that you have never taken even one dose of my Preservative Preparations,

for if you had, you would never have, believe me, young man," giving him an emphatic shake, "never have fallen into crime."

Aunt Dolores rushed to the captured culprit with a show of fury, exclaiming, "Oh! you bold, base, bad young man!"

Taking advantage of her close proximity to him, she whispered in his ear, "Don't say a word! Vic will get you off."

"It seems to me that I have seen him somewheres," observed Portley, inspecting Gil's features.

Apparelled as the same handsome, stylish young man as the day before, Vic now entered the room, prepared to carry out her aunt's instructions. She started back in no little alarm when she saw Gil in the doctor's grasp, and would have fled from the apartment had not her aunt energetically beckoned to her, as she said, "Oh, here's my nephew, Doctor. Let him deal with this person."

She tried by signs to make Vic understand the situation.

"This strange young man, Mortimer," she resumed, addressing Vic, "has been found, thanks to the doctor, concealed here in this room. Won't you relieve the doctor? Take him and turn him out of doors, or give him in charge of the police."

Before Aunt Dolores had finished speaking, Rose had run with effusion to Vic, murmuring "Dear Mortimer!"

But she fell back with deep mortification in every feature, when she saw that Vic paid not the slightest attention to her. Vic's whole mind, in fact, was absorbed in the unexpected sight which had so alarmed her.

"O, don't turn him out of doors," officiously urged Portley,

fearful that he would miss the opportunity of figuring in a newspaper paragraph. "Give him in charge, my dear St. John," speaking to Vic across his prisoner, whom he held in a grasp of iron. "March him off to the nearest station. He's a suspicious character—a jail-bird. I'll go with you as a witness and state how I captured him. I'll make a deposition that will send him up on the island double quick. Never fear, madam," soothingly to Aunt Dolores, "we'll have the rascal locked up in less than two twos. My hat, Rose."

Rose handed Portley his hat, which was lying on the table. He took it with his disengaged hand, put it on, and gave the crown a tap, as much as to say, "I'm ready."

Vic now approached Gil, having, by rapid meaning glances between herself and her aunt, formed a project for the release of Gil, whom she now roughly seized likewise by the coat collar, so that the miserable delinquent stood between Vic and the doctor, pulled first one way and then the other, gazing at Vic, then at the doctor.

"I'll manage him, Doctor," said Vic, giving him a tremendous shake. "I wouldn't trouble you for the world to go to the police station."

"Don't mention it, my boy," cheerily responded Portley. "Not the slightest trouble, I assure you. Besides, I am only too glad to do you a good turn—you, who are my intended son-in-law. I shall not rest easy until I see this infamous fellow well under lock and key, and my statement made to the police how I risked my life in securing the thieving villain. So let's walk him off between us. We'll soon meet a policeman. Come along, you, sir."

And Gil received from the doctor another alarmingly muscular shake, as he began to drag him towards the door.

"Will you please listen to me for one moment," now pleaded Gil, perceiving the quandary Vic and his aunt were in, and hoping that by engaging Portley in conversation he would loosen his hold, and that he would thus have a chance of bursting away from his captor's grasp.

"No, young reprobate, no," roared Portley, redder in the face than ever. "Not a word until you speak before the judge in court, and I have made my statement. I dare say you are well known to the police. Come on."

Here he pulled Gil towards him.

"Yes, come on," exclaimed Vic, pulling him in the opposite direction. She looked at Aunt Dolores in despair.

That acute and observant lady had been studying the situation, as a baffled but competent and self-poised general studies the varying fortunes of the battle-field, and, like him, when he sees, with the glance of genius, informed at the right moment by a flash of inspiration, how the day may be saved, so she saw that there was but one thing to do, and did it.

Throwing up her hands, and giving vent to a piercing shriek, she cried out as she reeled and tottered against Portley, "O, I'm going! Doctor, I'm so faint! Doctor, I shall fall. Help me! Help me!"

The Doctor was obliged to let go his hold on Gil, as he instinctively extended his arms to prevent Aunt Dolores from falling to the floor. She had so well timed her fall, that she landed plump in the doctor's arms, where she lay apparently in a faint.

Gil being thus freed, Vic hurried him away, saying to Portley: "For heaven's sake, Doctor, attend to my poor aunt while I secure this scamp. I'll manage him."

As she marched with Gil out of the room, she said to him, "Watch at the door for St. John. Tell him when he comes that a room has been secured for him. Keep him in the front parlor for a few moments until I am prepared to see him."

IV.

A REVELATION.

"MY dear madam," said Portley, burdened with the weight of Aunt Dolores, who reclined in his arms as one in a swoon, "your nerves are unstrung. It's the excitement. You can't stand it."

"Oh! oh! oh!" moaned the patient, wondering whether Vic and Gil had already escaped, and whether it was safe for her to come to yet.

It now occurred to Portley that the only way to revive the fainting lady was to administer to her a dose of his Preservative Preparations. He no sooner thought of it, than he proceeded to put the plan into execution. Little dreaming of what the doctor was meditating, Aunt Dolores remained as described, determined to hold Portley a prisoner until Vic had time to make off with Gil. Portley gently lowered her head on his left arm. Her face was towards

him; her eyes closed. He put his right hand into his coat pocket, and drew forth a fair-sized bottle containing a liquid of a greenish tint, in which was a quantity of pills. He shook the vial, uncorked it with his teeth, and firmly holding his victim, thrust the neck of the bottle into her partly opened mouth, and, ere she was aware, he had emptied the contents down her throat.

"There!" he exclaimed. "I'm ready to lay my life you're better now. Ain't you?"

She certainly came to herself with astonishing quickness, starting from his arms with a scream which was half lost in a choking gurgle. She gagged and spit out, and took from her mouth a handful of pills which she secretly dropped on the floor. This was, indeed, more than she had bargained for; but she had gained her point, and, like an able general and a true woman, she did not regret the price it cost.

"You're a different woman already!" triumphantly exclaimed Portley, as she looked around with a wry face, smacking her lips, and trying to get the disagreeable taste out of her mouth.

"Indeed I am a different woman, Doctor," she replied. She muttered to herself: "Before, I was well; now, I'm sick."

"That's a scientific triumph," Portley carolled forth in exultation, "and a practical example of the power of pills and potions—that is, Portley's Preservative Preparations in the form of pills and potions."

Aunt Dolores now resolved to carry into execution the plan she had conceived to extricate Vic from her engagement with Rose Portley while personating St. John.

"And now, Doctor," she began, addressing herself likewise to Rose, who had been a silent but sympathizing spectator of her sufferings, "I will let you into a little family secret, which it is proper you and your daughter should know. It may be a sore disappointment to you at first, but you have too much strength and greatness of mind, Doctor, to allow any disappointment to trouble you overmuch."

"Co-rect, madam," and Portley straightened himself and held his head high as he heard himself so liberally praised. "You have judged me with marvellous insight. But to what do you refer?"

"To the attachment that exists between my nephew, Mortimer, and my niece, Mrs. Chester."

She watched the effect of these words upon the doctor and upon Rose. The latter seemed as if every function of life had come to a full stop—a sudden termination of existence and transformation into marble—for she stood like a statue looking at the speaker in petrified amazement. Then she appeared to recover her breath with two or three sharp little screams, her hands held against her heart.

The doctor's face fell, and he clutched the air wildly; his heavy jaws snapped together, and he began grinding his teeth.

"I hope you won't excite yourself, my dear Miss Portley, nor you, my dear Doctor. I tell you this out of pure gratitude."

Thus Aunt Dolores, as she looked from one to the other with the keenest sympathy in tone and glance. And then, she added, "Did you not notice how coolly he treated Rose this morning?"

"Mortimer in love with Mrs. Chester!" were the words that fell from Rose's pallid lips. "That's why he took no notice of me when he came in."

"And he proposed to Rose only yesterday," cried Portley, finding his voice at last.

"Hugged and kissed me—called me sweet things—asked me to be his wife. Only yesterday!"

Between tears and sobs Rose enumerated these particulars.

"And to-day—such is the lack of moral sense on the part of my graceless nephew," observed Aunt Dolores, relentlessly bent on carrying out her design—"To-day he intends to propose marriage to my niece. I overheard a conversation between them at breakfast in which he made an appointment to meet her alone in this room to-day, and about this hour, too, and from what I heard, I believe he will pop the question to her."

"Why, madam, you actually stun me! My poor child! My blighted Rose!"

He put his arm round his daughter's waist. She was weeping silently.

"Oh! father, isn't this awful?" said Rose.

"Awful, my child, awful!" returned Portley, in a tearful voice, whipping out his red bandanna, whimpering and wiping his eyes. "And my intentions towards this young man were so honorable, so benevolent. Only think of me, in the purity, sincerity and kindness of my heart, giving him all the Russias, every single one," sobbing and drying his eyes, "to say nothing of the Pacific Coast, for the manufacture and sale of my Preservative Preparations. But, madam, unless

I hear this from his own lips, I cannot credit it; I really cannot."

"Neither can I—nor will I," exclaimed Rose. "After the way he talked to me, calling me his adorable creature—asking me to be his wife—no, I won't believe it."

"It's quite natural for you to doubt what I have told you," rejoined Aunt Dolores. "But you shall hear him speak to her. Then judge for yourselves. I am as curious as you are to know what will take place at this interview between him and my niece. This is just about the time"—glancing at the clock on the mantel, "that they appointed to meet. Let us conceal ourselves and listen to their conversation. You'll know them by their voices, for, although their wonderful resemblance extends even to their voices, his is just a trifle deeper in tone. But you must on no account show yourselves."

"No, we will not," eagerly exclaimed Portley and Rose. "Where can we hide?"

"Here is a butler's pantry which we do not use. When you are inside you can hear every word spoken in this room, even when the door is closed."

Aunt Dolores opened the door of a good-sized pantry formed by a recess, on one side of the room.

"Get in there. I will close the door, lock it, if you don't object, and take the key out, so that when they come in here, they will find no one," said Aunt Dolores. "Should they think of looking into the pantry, and then finding it locked, they will, of course, conclude that no one can be inside, as they know I always carry the key. I will hide behind the curtains, so as to be ready to release you the moment they have gone."

It was not without some reluctance that Portley and Rose consented to be locked in the pantry, but their curiosity was so great that it overcame every other consideration.

V.

THE MOCK-MARRIAGE PROPOSAL.

PORTLEY and Rose being now safely under lock and key, Aunt Dolores sought Vic's indispensable help to the completion of her project. A few hurried words soon informed Vic of the state of affairs. She was still in male attire. Her manœuvering aunt said in a whisper, as they entered the room from the parlor, "Come, Vic, and make love to me in a loud tone of voice. I represent your cousin, Mrs. Chester. They are prepared for all this performance. You must ask my hand in marriage. You will not only have to put the questions, but likewise answer them yourself, for your cousin's voice and your own, you know, are so much alike, except that Mortimer's is deeper in tone, as a man's should be."

Vic entered heartily into the spirit of the thing, as she always did when acting a part, possessing, as previously stated, a natural aptitude for the histrionic art; and, as with all art-aptitudes, its exercise was the complete gratification of an intense passion.

As Aunt Dolores wheeled the arm-chair near to the pan-

try, and sat in it, Vic said in a loud, deep voice: "Cousin, dear, you have kept your appointment punctually and well. There is no one here? Ah! This pantry?"

And then she tried and shook the door, saying in a voice that was low and gentle, "Mortimer, dear, that door's locked. Aunty keeps the key."

Portley and Rose felt thankful to Aunt Dolores for locking them in and taking out the key.

Vic then approached the arm-chair, and carried on, with herself, the following dialogue, varying the tones of her rich, musical voice to suit the persons she was representing; a fine, manly, middle register for Mortimer, and her own low, sweet, liquid, womanly tones for his cousin, Mrs. Chester.

"Darling cousin, we are alone. I have much to say to you."

"Dear Mortimer, I came here according to appointment, and I am prepared to listen."

"Beloved, I have long desired an opportunity to tell you, adorable creature,"

("Just what he called me," whispered Rose to her father.)

"That I love you with a deep and tender affection."

("Damned scoundrel!" muttered Portley. "He's no man!")

"But, Mortimer, you have engaged yourself to Rose Portley; until that is broken off——"

"But you know, dear cousin, that was only a little flirtation—a mere joke with that foolish thing, Rose Portley. I have broken off with her already. I swear I will never see

her again; I will never let go this dear, darling little hand which rests so lovingly in mine, until you promise to be my wife—my own ducky of a wife. Your heart must tell you what my lips would murmur in your ear."

("Oh, that Mrs. Chester's a two-faced thing," said Rose, between her teeth. "I could scratch her eyes out.")

("I'll make him sweat for this," hissed Portley, in the same low tone.)

"Dear Mortimer, I will be your wedded wife, and you shall be my hubby dear."

Vic now kissed Aunt Dolores with a loud smack, the osculatory noise distinctly reaching the ears of the listeners.

("I won't stand it!" exclaimed Rose in a suppressed voice.)

("I can't stand it!" cried Portley, under his breath.)

("Oh, Edmond, Edmond," mentally ejaculated Rose, "if you will will but chastise that shameless trifler, I am yours till death.")

Aunt and niece now concluded that their little comedy had accomplished the purpose intended. Vic retired to the front parlor, leaving Aunt Dolores to ascertain from Portley and Rose the actual state of their feelings.

Aunt Dolores immediately unlocked the pantry-door, saying, "They are gone now. You can come out."

The doctor and Rose emerged from their place of concealment in a state of great excitement.

"Madam, we owe you a thousand thanks," cried Portley, "for unmasking to us that villain, and he your nephew; too."

He added to himself: "If I don't fix him, my name isn't Portley."

"I implore you," pleaded Aunt Dolores, "not to breathe to any one, a syllable of what you have overheard."

"Not a syllable to any one," weeped Rose, with the mental reservation, "except to Edmond."

She sank on one of the sofas and covered her face with her hands.

Portley in a trice had out his red bandanna, and slowly wiped his face, holding his silver-rimmed eye-glasses in front of him, between the thumb and forefinger of his left hand.

"Madam, you may depend upon my prudence," began Portley, in *tremolo* accents. "Although this is outrageous treatment, Portley will suffer in silence;" a burst of grief interrupts his speech, while he mops up invisible tears. "Portley will seek consolation, madam, in the rapt contemplation of his own rectitude,"—another outburst, as he soaks up the microscopic tear-drops—"and the good that he can do by his Preservative Preparations, which have never been known to fail in kidney and bilious troubles, madam,"—grief for a moment choked his utterance,—“and in restoring the wasted vital energies, and making the aged and afflicted young and well,”—heartfelt sobs again forced him to cease for an instant as he vigorously dried his eyes;—“they help pulmonary disorders right along; for sale by all the druggists, country stores, and corner groceries throughout the Union, and in many parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa.” Excessive demonstrations of grief played sad havoc with the three continents. “Excuse this weakness, madam, but never has Portley, the famous, I may say, the renowned Portley, whose celebrity dates from the better and purer days of the Republic, who has caused the bane of our coun-

try—dyspepsia—to disappear before his Preservative Preparations—never, in the whole course of his long and glorious professional career, has he experienced such rough and cruel treatment. Hence these tears! Come, Rose, my child, my poor, ill-used Rose.” Rose takes her father’s arm. “You’ll excuse us, madam, if we go home the shortest way—by the balcony; I know our window is open. I really don’t feel like going into the street in my present condition.”

“Certainly, if you choose to go that way,” answered Aunt Dolores, glad to get rid of them.

Portley and Rose walked to the middle window. Here Portley put his hand to the window-door and found it open. The doctor made a mental note of the fact. St. John, the reader will recollect, had left it unlocked.

Turning to Aunt Dolores at the balcony, Portley said: “I thank you, madam, and bid you an affectionate farewell. Take Portley’s blessing,” raising his hands in benediction.

“I, too, thank you, madam,” tearfully exclaimed Rose, “for exposing a villain who had made an impression upon my heart, but whose image is now blotted out forever.”

“I am, indeed, pained,” returned Aunt Dolores, “that a nephew of mine should have caused you so much sorrow. Adieu.”

Portley and Rose disappeared upon the balcony, closing the window-door behind them. The weather still continued warm. Rose had kept on her hat and sacque, and Portley had retained his overcoat, and had taken his hat from the table in making his exit. He now put it on, and as he whispered to Rose, his whole manner underwent a sudden change: “He’s rich. We’ll begin suit against him at once

for breach of promise of marriage, and put our damages at one hundred thousand dollars. It will be a splendid advertising card for me and my Preservative Preparations. Couldn't have anything better. And as he's a non-resident, I'll get out an order for his arrest, and make him give bonds for his appearance. I'll get our former coachman, Branigan, who is now a court officer since his uncle was elected a judge, I'll get him to rush the thing through. I tell you, they've to get up pretty early to get the best of Portley."

So saying, Portley, followed by Rose, entered his dwelling, having crossed over to his own balcony and pushed open the window.

VI.

THE MAN THAT WILL ALWAYS DO HIS DUTY.

"WELL, how do they take it?" asked Vic, coming in from the parlor.

"Splendid," replied Aunt Dolores. "Rose whimpered a little, and the old gentleman shed a peck of tears, but he seems quite resigned to bear his sorrows in silence, and seek consolation in his Preservative Preparations. Rose says your image is now blotted out from her heart forever. Poor thing! She has probably swallowed a piece of blotting paper."

"Well, I feel very sorry that I caused Rose and old man Portley—the humbug—so much pain, though I can't help laughing about it"—here Vic burst forth into a loud, long,

musical laugh ;—" but I couldn't foresee how the thing was going to turn out. And now I'll go and lay aside pants forever, and be in readiness to receive Mortimer in my own proper person."

"I'll go and give orders to the cook," observed Aunt Dolores, "to get us up a fine dinner against St. John's arrival, to celebrate the happy reconciliation. I shall settle upon you, Vic, sufficient to give you a moderate income independent of St. John's resources."

"Oh! auntie," broke out Vic in grateful tones.

"Not a word, my dear. My greatest pleasure in life is to see you happy. Perhaps St. John may have better luck after you are married." She added, *sotte voce*,—"I doubt if he is worth all you have undergone for him."

Aunt Dolores left the room as Vic sank on the sofa and passed into a delicious reverie. She recalled all the events that had occurred to her since her arrival in New York, and reviewed her own part in the mystification of St. John, Portley, and Rose with a humorous sense of triumphant satisfaction. The thought of the near approach of reunion with St. John caused the blood to course through her veins like liquid fire. A perfect delirium of joy filled her being as, in her mind's eye, she rested on her lover's breast. The words of the poet came to her, and she addressed them to St. John, whose love-lit face her powerful imagination pictured close to her own :

"I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart,
I but know that I love thee whatever thou art."

She remained a long while in this blissful state, building

innumerable sky-castles—a sort of architecture equally pleasing and unprofitable.

An hour probably flew by in this agreeable pastime.

Moved by a sudden impulse, Vic rose from her recumbent posture, and went to the mirror to see that her gentlemanly apparel was in perfect order, and then opened the piano, at which she sat.

“Before I lay aside male costume,” she said to herself, half aloud, “I’ll sing Mortimer’s song. How often have I recalled it !”

She ran her fingers over the keys with practised ease, evoking rippling music. Then playing a tender yet passionate love-melody, she accompanied herself as she sang, in a contralto voice of penetrating power and great sweetness the following song :

O, DARLING, TELL ME WHY !

O, darling, tell me why
This bliss when thou art nigh,
Why this light and ready mirth,
Why this soaring far from earth,
’Midst an atmosphere of joy,
Of pure delight without alloy.

Why this bliss when thou art nigh,

O, angel, tell me why !

O, darling, tell me why
Thou dost so softly sigh,
When I alone am by ;
Why that sweet and gladsome smile,
Thy dear hand in mine the while,
Why that flitting, tell-tale blush !
Why this rapturous, thrilling hush !
And why that fond, bright, beaming eye,
O, angel, tell me why ?

O, whence this thrilling gladness !
This delicious madness !
This mounting up on high
Into joy's etherial sky ?
O, well thou know'st the reason why
Our hearts are bound with bands of steel,
Our souls are joined for woe or weal,
Forever in the coming time—
Forever mine, forever thine.

As the last note died away in a soft strain of melodic witchery—she remained seated at the piano silent and immovable, lost in ecstatic musings—the balcony window was slowly and noiselessly opened. The piano was placed in an alcove on the left hand side of the room as you entered from the hall. Sitting with her head bent in meditation, it was impossible for her to notice that the middle balcony window had slowly turned on its hinges, without noise.

Two men appeared on the balcony. One was Portley. The other was a plainly dressed man of middle height, about forty years old, and conspicuous for a shock of hair of the reddest of red, with a huge pair of whiskers to match.

"That's the man," whispered Portley, with a grim smile as he pointed to Vic. "Branigan, do your duty."

"Be aisy," replied Branigan, in the same tone, and with a self-complacent air and a gesture of his huge, red hairy hand, that spoke volumes. "Be aisy, I repate, yer honor, for Branigan's a man that will always do his dooty. I'll introjuice meself."

Portley retired, well pleased with the results of his efforts. He had indeed used every means that money, ingenuity, rapidity of movement and utter unscrupulousness could

command to affect his object. Returning home with Branigan and all the requisite papers, he heard some one playing the piano in Vic's house. Remembering that the middle balcony window was unlocked, and hoping that it might possibly be still in that condition, he took Branigan with him to reconnoitre. To their joy they found it unlocked; and that the person who was singing and playing on the piano was no other than the very individual of whom they were in search.

Vic was rudely disturbed from the delightful reverie into which she had fallen, by a sudden and an insolently heavy tap on the shoulder.

She turned on the piano stool as though stung by an adder, and sprang to her feet.

She was confronted by the huge red whiskers, yawning grin and a bow from the bushy red head that ornamented the stalwart shoulders of Mr. Michael Branigan.

"Good marning ter yer!"

"O! who are you, and what do you want? And where did you come from?"

She put the questions in alarmed, hurried accents. Every vestige of color had fled from her cheeks.

"Shure I have the honor to address Mr. Mortimer St. John?"

"Well!" she said, cautiously.

"Don't you know yer shoed?"

"Eh? Shoed?" she looked at him puzzled, then down at her boots. Catching at the first solution of the mystery that offered itself, she exclaimed, "Ah! I see! Shoemaker! But, my man, you should have told the girl to announce

you. It's not my habit to give orders to my shoemaker in my parlors. I suppose you're a shoemaker living in the neighborhood and you want my custom, eh?"

"Divil a bit," replied Branigan, gruffly. "Look at me badge," exhibiting his badge under his lapel. "I'm cart-officer Branigan, and no more a shoemaker than yer honor. Yis, sir, I'm cart-officer of Justice O'Shaughnessy's cart, I'll have ye know, and the dignity of the cart's got to be maintained, and if ye've got the dom cheek to call the cart-officer of the sid cart a shoemaker agin, by the bloody nose of the howly St. Michael, I'll knock daylight through the loikes of ye."

He spit upon both his hands, rubbed them well together, clenched his fists and glared at Vic, who retreated a few steps, trembling and pale, declaring, "No offence intended, I assure you. A court-officer! What is this! Tell me! Tell me, my good man, what's the meaning of this!"

Her voice was husky. Her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth, and she felt her head beginning to swim. Only by a strong effort was she enabled to retain her self-possession.

"Ah! Don't let it bother ye," said Branigan, mollified by Vic's disclaimer of intentional offence, and rendered sympathetic by the evident trepidation of the extremely handsome young gentleman—as she appeared to him—whom he was addressing. "Can't ye give bail?"

"Bail! Bail! What for?"

"Why, yer nabbed—arristed. I'll be after throubling ye to walk a bit wid me. I will always do me dooty."

"Arrested!" repeated Vic, ready to drop, and feeling

her limbs giving way. "Please sir, how arrested, what for?"

"To make ye give bonds to appear in a shoot agin ye for brache of promise. Ah! me swate fate-cheered young man, it's a ticklish thing, so it is, to troifle wid a woman's fale-ings."

"And must I go with you?" she asked, a cold perspiration breaking out upon her at every pore, and an uncontrollable tremor seizing her whole body.

"Shure. Here's the arder of the cart," showing a paper.

Vic ran through it hastily. It commanded the officer to take possession of the body of Mortimer St. John, and bring the same before the court at a certain hour and day therein named.

Vic reasoned with herself thus: "But I am not Mortimer St. John in reality; hence, I cannot be taken as Mortimer St. John. But what's to be done? Shall I call Aunt Dolores? She'll be frightened to death. I must spare her this stroke of anxiety; it would make her ill. I must try and get out of the scrape by myself."

An idea occurred to her, and she recovered something of her old-time confidence.

"Will you allow me to go to my room first?" she asked.

"Of curse. But I will have to go wid ye."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Vic.

"Ah! ye naden't mind me if ye want to put on a clane shirt," replied Branigan, with a grin.

"But, my man, I couldn't think of it. You shall examine the room and satisfy yourself that it is impossible for me to escape. Then stand outside the door for ten minutes. If you will do that I will give you a fifty dollar bill."

"Will ye be sure to come out of the room agin?"

"I will. I give you my word of honor that I will come out of the room, and out of the same door that I went in; I give you my word of honor."

"But will ye give me the fifty?"

"Certainly I will, and before I go in, too."

"Whist! I'm yer man," spitting into his right palm, and rubbing it with his left hand. "Give us yer fisht on it, me b'y."

Not without a feeling of repugnance Vic extended to him her dainty hand, which he enclosed in a vise-like grip, giving her a tremendous shake, as he said, "Agreed, me b'y. Yer know, me fine feller, it does a man's heart good to mate the loikes of ye. But, of curse, I must arrist ye, ye know," seizing Vic by the coat collar, with a merry twinkle in his eye. "Shure, I will always do me dooty."

He thus escorted Vic to the door of her room, where the bargain was duly consummated. He then sat on the staircase, contemplating, with the eyes of affection, a new, crisp fifty dollar bill which he held in his hands, while Vic locked herself in her room.

VII.

PORTLEY'S MISSION.

IN blissful ignorance of the occurrence narrated in the preceding chapter, Aunt Dolores was busied superintending the preparations of the superb dinner with which St. John was to be welcomed. She had heard Vic singing in the

back parlor, and supposing that she was still there, she went to tell her that it was time to dress in anticipation of St. John's expected visit. Finding Vic no longer there, Aunt Dolores concluded that she had gone to her room. The piano was still open. She closed it, and was about to return to the basement, when the bell rang and Doctor Portley was announced.

The doctor's countenance wore an expression of condolence, tempered with the look of a man, who having had "a duty to perform," had performed it with Roman firmness.

Aunt Dolores received him with her usual affability, but with an air which plainly said, "Well, what's out now?"

"Walk in, Doctor. I trust you have recovered from the shock of this morning. I was so disgusted with Mortimer's conduct, that I have entirely discarded him—don't care what becomes of him. I never want to see him again."

"Indeed! Indeed, madam," returned Portley; "I'm getting partly over the shock—I may say by degrees. I admire your splendid devotion to justice and right. What moral character and moral courage you have! Moral character! Ah! Ah! Moral character! What a theme for a poet!"

Portley remained for a moment in abstracted silence, lost, apparently, in contemplating the inexpressible beauty of "moral character," as a poetical theme. In reality his thoughts were not of quite so elevated an order.

"She's deuced civil," he said to himself. "I can't understand it, after I have had her nephew arrested and placed under bonds. She says she don't care what becomes of him. I don't believe in such savage saintliness—such un-

natural disinterestedness. She's got a purpose. What is it?"

Aunt Dolores looked at him with a curious gaze, and wondered what deviltry he was hatching, and what his visit portended.

"Madam, I trust you do not think my feeling too harsh towards your wretched nephew?"

As Portley said this, he looked at her through his silver-rimmed eye-glasses with a deprecatory gaze.

"Too harsh! Doctor, you are a model of Christian moderation. If you had drawn a pistol on him, you could scarcely have been blamed."

"Me! Me! Portley draw a pistol upon one of his fellow-beings!" It was positively a volume of sermons personified to see the virtuous horror that overspread the features of the speaker. "Portley use a deadly weapon against even the meanest, most degraded of the human race? No! He who has wrought and toiled for man during so many years? He who has sought to raise the fallen—fallen by the way-side—by means of his Preservative Preparations? Such a man like that, draw a pistol on your nephew! You are mistaken in Portley, madam!"

"Of course, I know, Doctor, you are utterly incapable of such an action. What I meant to say was that the ordinary man placed in your cruel and humiliating position, would have done so."

"Ah! Madam, *there* I agree with you. The *ordinary* man would. With that keen perception so characteristic of your sex you have penetrated that truth, which I confess out of sheer modesty, I have tried to hide; namely, that

the humble individual who now addresses you, is *not* an ordinary man. But my effort to hide the truth, madam, has proven a flat failure. But it's the only thing that I ever failed in. Fact is, you can't dam greatness. It will surely overflow somewheres. By the bye, did your nephew seem flustered? Say anything?"

He paused and looked inquiringly at her, somewhat surprised that she did not allude more directly to Branigan's unceremonious visit.

"No, he did not say much," replied Aunt Dolores, a little puzzled. "He's always very cool, you know. Takes everything easy, because he has no moral character."

She thought this was a safe general remark, sufficiently non-committal, and sure to meet the doctor's views.

"So he took it easy, did he?" thought Portley. Then he asked, "How's Mrs. Chester under the circumstances?" And he said to himself, "Her hubby dear must feel pretty cheap."

"O, Mrs. Chester's not feeling very bright," returned Aunt Dolores.

She had scarcely finished speaking when they were startled by hearing a scream in the hall, followed by the gruff tones of a man's angry voice, exclaiming, "By the bloody nose of the howly St. Michael, it is cart-officer Branigan, is it, that ye want to be after fooling wid?"

Portley started to his feet. Aunt Dolores ran to the door, breathless. As she opened it, Vic, in lady's attire, came flying down the staircase pursued by Branigan. She rushed into the back parlor through the open door, with the exclamation, "Oh! aunty!" as she took a position behind

the ample form of her amazed relative. Branigan pushed in after her and stood mid-way between Aunt Dolores and Portley.

"Well, what's all this? What do you want, sir?" cried Aunt Dolores, looking from Vic to Branigan.

The latter individual addressed himself to Portley, as follows: "Doctor, me prisoner has gone and transmogrified himself into a woman," pointing to Vic, who was dressed in the same black silk with white lace overdresss, which she wore when visiting the Portleys. She looked exquisitely beautiful, and bore herself with queenly grace. "That's Mr. Mortimer St. John in them wimmen toggeries. She's him. No, I mane, he's her."

This announcement was equally surprising to Aunt Dolores and Portley, and to each told a different story. The former said nothing, but the latter threw up his hands and cried, "Eh? What? Can it be? Portley sold—completely sold?"

During the excitement St. John and Gil had arrived, and according to Vic's instructions Gil took him into the front parlor. Hearing the hubbub, Gil rushed to the sliding-doors, followed by St. John. Pushing them open, he advanced into the room, St. John at his heels, supposing that he was to follow his conductor.

"Vic! Aunt Dolores! Doctor Portley!" fell from the lips of the astonished St. John as his eyes met the familiar forms and features of the persons there assembled.

Vic took a few steps towards St. John, murmuring, "Mortimer!"

Portley had noted Vic's attitude towards St. John, and his quick ear had caught her musically intoned ejaculation.

"Slippery Dick here, and Mrs. Chester, whom Branigan has found out, calls him Mortimer!" thus Portley reflected. "O! Ah!"

These two exclamations were uttered half aloud, with a long pause between them, and seemed to express the net result of a series of reflections and inferences.

At this moment the balcony middle window was thrown violently open, and the avenging figure of Edmond Lee, brandishing a heavy bludgeon, was seen, accompanied by Rose Portley.

Rose had related her wrongs to him, and he had determined to kill somebody to show her how much he loved her. Rose had come to point out to him "the shameless trifler."

As he stepped into the room, wild and haggard, flourishing his death-dealing club, Edmond called out huskily, "Rose, where's that double-faced villain, St. John? I'll brain him!"

Vic threw herself into St. John's arms and glanced terrified over her shoulders at Edmond, and as she placed herself between her lover and danger, she exclaimed, "That madman again!"

Quick as thought, St. John disengaged one arm and drew a loaded revolver, already cocked, from his hip pocket, and presented it at Edmond's heart, his hand extending across Vic's shoulder and behind her head. St. John said quietly, "I'm ready for you now."

Rose now screamed with terror, and casting herself in front of Edmond, and with both her arms round his neck, she looked backwards to St. John, and cried in pleading accents, "Don't shoot, please don't, dear Mr. Slippery Dick—good Mr. Slapjack?"

A gleam of humor lightened St. John's countenance as he lowered his pistol.

Portley struck an attitude, and summed up the whole situation with the words, "O, I see!"

He now acted as peacemaker. Explanations followed, and the excited contestants soon became pacified. Mr. Michael Branigan was dismissed by Portley. The conscientious official took his leave, muttering, as he securely placed in his pocket the fifty dollar bill, "Shure, it's the dignity of the cart that must be upheld, and Branigan's the man that will al-ways do his dooty."

After the departure of this excellent gentleman, Aunt Dolores invited the others to remain to dinner, under the conviction that the universal social solvent is, what is called in Californese, "a square meal."

Portley finally consented to be reconciled, convinced that he could do nothing different to further his interests.

"Portley is *not* malicious," he emphatically declared. But he expressed the opinion in terms not to be misunderstood, and in a voice of power, that Doctor Philander Potter Portley's Preservative Preparations had still an important mission to perform in consummating the immediate restoration and the unconditional reconstruction of the wasted vital energies of a wicked world.

THE END.

THE SATCHEL SERIES.

COMPRISING

Story, Romance, Travel, Adventure, Humor, Pleasure.

BY POPULAR AMERICAN AUTHORS.

Printed from bold, clear type, on good paper, with bright, cheerful pages, and neatly bound in paper covers.

WELL RECEIVED! SELL WELL EVERYWHERE! A GREAT HIT!

THE BOOKS OF THE "SATCHEL SERIES" ARE:—

Handy little volumes.—*Philadelphia Record*.
Bright things by American authors.—*Whig, Quincy, Ill.*
Instructive as well as agreeable.—*New Bedford Standard*.
They are not of the trashy dime novel class.—*Glens Falls Messenger*.
Really of a lively and spicy character.—*American Monthly Magazine*.
Gotten up in a fresh style and printed in plain type.—*Pittsburg Leader*.
Cheap, convenient, and by popular authors.—*Epis. Methodist, Baltimore*.
Bright and breezy, and above all, pure in sentiment.—*Boston Transcript*.
They deserve well of the reading public.—*Illustrated Christian Weekly*.
Acknowledged by all to be bright, elegant and charming. There is nothing trashy about them.—*Journal, Somerville, Mass.*

Bright and brief—just the books to read in the cars, at the seashore, or during leisure hours at home.—*Chronicle, Farmington, Me.*

The brightest and best brief works by American authors who are well known to the reading public. They have proved very popular, particularly as summer travelling companions.—*Boston Home Journal*.

Complete in themselves, and interesting. They fill a void, for heretofore cheap literature has been of the flashy and sensational kind, injurious not only to the readers, but to the whole community, because of its effect. A pleasing feature of the volumes issued by the AUTHORS' PUBLISHING COMPANY is that, while they are not dry or insipid, they have a moral tone and effect.—*Full River Herald*.

NEW VOLUMES ISSUED WEEKLY.

Lily's Lover;

OR, A TRIP OUT OF SEASON. By the author of "Climbing the Mountains," etc. 135 pp. 35 cents.

Is entertaining.—*Cin. Times*.

Written in a pleasing style.—*N. Y. Mail*.

A genuine love story.—*Epis. Methodist*.

Lily is the flower of the family.—*Epit. of Literature*.

Really a well told story of love's transformation.—*Advance*.

Those who would pass an hour or two pleasantly, should read it.—*Christian, St. Louis*.

Is a very sweet and pretty story of summer-time romantic adventures among the green hills and silvery lakes of Connecticut.—*Boston Home Journal*.

Rosamond Howard.

A story of fact and fancy. By KATE R. LOVELACE. 112pp. 25 cts.

Cloth extra. 60 cts.

Abounds in quiet pathos.—*Philadelphia Record*.

Has excellent points, and the heroine has a well sustained character throughout.—*Epitome of Literature*.

The tale is told with an evident sympathy with all that is good in woman, and makes the daintie kind of summer reading.—*N. Y. Mail*.

A modest, touching and attractive story—pathetic and beautiful. The story is well unfolded and excellently managed. It begins interesting, continues and ends interesting.—*The Christian, St. Louis*.

Nobody's Business.

By the author of "Dead Men's Shoes," "Heavy Yokes," "Against the World," etc. 128pp....30 cts.

Spicy.—*Boston Contributor*.

A charming summer book.—*Epitome of Literature*.

An admirable book to take to the seashore.—*Phila. Record*.

Full of lively sallies and bright hits.—*Baptist Weekly, N. Y.*

Amusing incidents pleasantly related.—*Mo. Review Cur. Literature*.

A more charming book for sheer amusement we have seldom met with.—*Mail*.

A great provocative to wakefulness and pleasure in traveling.—*Providence Press*.

We have not enjoyed anything so much for many a day.—*Potter's American Monthly*.

A piquant and spicy story, exceedingly entertaining, well written and full of snap.—*Meth. Pro't, Balto.*

It is sprightly, capitally told, sympathetically interesting, and highly amusing.—*Boston Home Journal*.

A breezy, spicy, rollicking story, admirably told and of unexceptional moral tone.—*Ill. Chris. Weekly, N. Y.*

Affords more hearty laughs than can be gotten out of the best comedy. The style is polished and spirited, the wit piquant, and its common sense sound as a dollar.—*Vicksburg Herald*.

Is a bright, sparkling extravaganza, and told in a very sprightly manner—a good book to drive away the blues. Creates the impression produced in a sick-room or a sedate and solemn company by a bright, breezy, cheery, pretty little woman.—*Christian Union*.

Our Peggotties.

To all women who appreciate the situation. By KESIAH SHELTON, author of "Heights and Depths of Ambition," "Humbled," etc. 106 pp.....25 cts.

Is well adapted for an idle hour.—*Mail*.

Remarkably witty little book.—*Clyde, N. Y., Times*.

Sketches of New England life cleverly written.—*Balto. Gazette*.

All housekeepers will appreciate it.—*West Meriden, Ct., Recorder*.

It was a very fruitful experience and is rich reading.—*Providence Press*.

An amusing account of trials and tribulations with "help."—*Phila. Record*.

A tale of woman's woe in the matter of servants—semi-humorous.—*N. Y. Post*.

Semi-humorous account of a New England woman's experience.—*Hartford Post*.

Affords a dollar's worth of recreation for a winter's evening.—*Woonsocket Reporter*.

Deeply interesting; and above all pure in sentiment.—*Farmington, Me., Chron.*

A pleasant companion while traveling or in the drawing-room at home.—*Odd Fellows' Register, Providence*.

Our Winter Eden.

PEN PICTURES OF THE TROPICS, with an Appendix of the Seward-Samana Mystery. By MRS. GENL. WM. LESLIE CASNEAU, author of "Hill Homes of Jamaica," "Prince Kashna," etc., who was lost on the *Emily B. Souder*, December, 1878, en route to her beautiful "Winter Eden" which she so charmingly describes in this work. 112 pp.....30 cts.

Bright, readable, and has value beside.—*N. Y. Mail*.

A bright and vivid description. It is written with a jaunty pen.—*Balt. Gazette*.

A pleasantly written book of travel and life in the West Indies.—*Buffalo Courier*.

Depicts life in that climate in all its beauty and attractiveness.—*New Bedford Standard*.

An interesting book, giving pen pictures of the Tropics in a charming manner.—*Boston Home Journal*.

A pleasant description of the peninsula of Samana which our government came so near purchasing.—*Boston Transcript*.

Describes the pleasure of life in the West Indies in glowing terms.—*Cin. Gaz.*

Relates to the Island of Samana, and as the author has lived there for some time, she is perfectly familiar with it, and gives many details of interest. It is well written.—*Boston Globe*.

By the wife of the U. S. Plenipotentiary to the Dominican Republic during the Pierce administration. Makes public for the first time the real cause of the failure of Secretary Seward's Samana scheme.—*Whig, Quincy, Ill.*

A Story of the Strike.

SCENES IN CITY LIFE. By ELIZABETH MURRAY. 125 pp..30 cts.

Vivacious tale.—*N. Y. Mail*.

Sound sense—will subserve a good purpose.—*San Fran. Chron.*

A pleasant story, inculcating economy, thrift, home-virtue, and honest industry as the basis of well-being and happiness.—*Sunday-School Times, Phila.*

This is one of the few books called out by the great railroad strike. The style is crisp and taking, and the book healthy and captivating.—*Temperance Union*.

Is a faithful delineation of city life among the high and low. Without being sensational or trashy it is lively and interesting.—*Providence Town and Country*.

A most timely book—a series of pen-pictures in which the philosophy of strikes and poverty and riches is illustrated. It tells the story completely, and with an aptness no political economist can excel, while it is perfectly level to the comprehension of any reader. Should be in every family and read by every man, woman and child of to-day.—*Meth. Protestant*.

Prisons Without Walls.

A Novel. By KELSIE ETHERIDGE.
Paper. 97pp.....25 cts.

The heroine, Egypt, is a glorious being.
—*N. Y. South.*

Has the curiosity-exciting tendency.—
Boston Beacon.

The characters are finely wrought up.—
Williamsport (Pa.) Register.

The interest grows and retains attention
to the end.—*N. O. Picayune.*

Is written in easy style and is sensation-
al enough to sustain its interest to the
end.—*Providence (R. I.) Town and Coun-
try.*

Short, sententious, marrowy, and spiced
with episodes. Has a warm Southern
aroma of orange and magnolia blossoms.
—*Baltimore Meth. Protestant.*

Of rare beauty and power in its vivid,
life-like picturing of men and places.
Through such artistic touches of skill and
strength we are wafted in thought as we
follow the hero and heroine through the
mazes of the old, old story.—*Ladies' Pearl, St. Louis.*

Strange, weird story. The style is pec-
uliar, and has a wonderful fascination
about it. We feel, while reading it, that
the strongest bars which hold us prisoners
are those which fate casts about us, whose
iron grasp we cannot unloose; that the
walls built highest about us are those
which neither our will, nor our despair,
nor our unutterable agony, can batter
down.—*Kansas City Times.*

Traveller's Grab-Bag.

A Hand-Book for utilizing Frag-
ments of Leisure in Railroad
Trains, Steamboats, Way Stations
and Easy Chairs. Edited by an
OLD TRAVELLER. 110 pp..25 cts.

Full of spice and fun.—*Baltimore Meth. Protestant.*

No traveler should be without it.—*N. Y. Forest and Stream.*

Teeming with rollicking humor, and a
kind of satire that will be enjoyable.—
Pittsburg Commercial.

There are many good stories in this
book; some exciting and interesting,
while none are by any means dull.—*Star Spangled Banner.*

It has three separate elements as unlike
as vinegar, aloes and honey. It is an odd
book, the design original, and is a grab-
bag literally in which to plunge the mind
by a glance of the eye.—*Kansas City Times.*

Is a handy little volume of short, inter-
esting original stories. Many a weary
moment may be beguiled away by the fa-
tigated traveler, provided he takes the
"Grab-Bag" with him.—*Epitome of Lit-
erature.*

Bonny Eagle.

A Vacation Sketch—the humor of
roughing it. 121pp.....25 cts.

Exceedingly entertaining.—*Brooklyn Times.*

Rich, racy and entertaining.—*Quincy (Ill.) Whig.*

Some of the experiences are exceed-
ingly ludicrous.—*Epitome of Literature.*

The style is fresh and graphic, and the
humor and satire are keen and pure.—
Boston Home Journal.

Funny; conceived and executed in great
good humor. Bright and entertaining.—
Chicago Sat. Eve. Herald.

Will be read with interest and amuse-
ment, and many a tear (of laughter) will
be shed over its all too few pages.—*San Francisco Post.*

Curious and ludicrous experiences graph-
ically told with a naive humor and deli-
cate satire. It is a fresh and spicy book.
—*St. Louis Herald.*

Very spicy, humorous, satirical. Par-
ticularly interesting. Delightful hours
amid forest scenes of beauty and retire-
ment.—*Hebrew Leader, N. Y.*

The relation of the haps and mishaps,
mild experiences of "roughing it" under
canvas, their fraternal intercourse with
the Dryads and Hamadryads of the grove,
and the varied incidents, is given in grace-
ful language. A friendly expedition has
rarely been chronicled in better style.—
The South, New York.

Voice of a Shell.

By O. C. AURINGER, 180pp.40 cts.

A fine collection.—*Pittsburg Leader.*

Well written.—*Schoharie Republican.*

Contains many fine lines.—*Balt. Gaz.*

There is no lack of fire and passion.—
Literary World.

It is delicate, beautiful and grand.—
Sandy Hill Herald.

Most of them written while at sea.—
Glen's Falls Messenger.

There is much in the book that is really
fine.—*Glen's Falls Republican.*

Much poetic feeling, and an absorbing
love of the sea.—*Herald, Chicago.*

Full of peculiar interest, grandeur and
tenderness.—*Boston Home Journal.*

Poetic merit. Most of them are short,
and present a pleasant variety.—*Troy Whig.*

A book of poems, having—as their col-
lective title implies—a salt-water flavor.—
Syracuse Herald.

Exceedingly pleasing, in their sweet
delicacy of thought. Poetic and home
like.—*N. Y. Mail.*

A touch of real poetic feeling and origi-
nality. The author's feeling for the sea
is evidently an intense one.—*American Bookseller.*

To all lovers of the sea, and to all who
linger by its sounding shores, nothing can
be more entrancing than the pages of this
beautiful little volume.—*Altoona Tribune.*

Who Did It?

By MARK FRAZIER. 137pp. 30 cts.

An excellent theme.—*N. Y. Post.*

Deeply interesting.—*Farmington, Me., Chronicle.*

In these times when grave-robbing is very common it is quite to the point.—*Whig, Quincy, Ill.*

A story with a suspected crime for the basis of its mysterious plot—well told and absorbing.—*Cin. Gazette.*

A sensational story in which a case of catalepsy so closely resembles death that the girl is declared dead.—*New Bedford, Mass., Standard.*

Is a thrilling story, and he who commences reading it will never stop until his eyes have glanced over its last page—*Clyde, N. Y., Times.*

Is a deeply interesting story of a beautiful girl. Around the terrible incident of being buried alive is woven a romantic story.—*Boston Home Journal.*

Portrays the dangers of premature burial. Serves a good purpose in directing attention to the necessity of absolute certainty as to death before interment is allowed to take place.—*Boston Traveller.*

It would be difficult to find a more excitable and thoroughly readable story. The history of the narrative claims an origin in south-eastern New Hampshire, but the scene is thrilling enough to have been laid in a far more eventful country. It is just the book for an hour's reading on a winter's night.—*Mirror and Amr'n., Manchester, N. H.*

Earnest Appeal to Moody.

A SATIRE. 34 pp. 10 cts.

A clever poem—the hits well taken and to the point, and will be appreciated by many as the names are outlined sufficiently as to be readily recognized.—*Epitome of Literature.*

The references to Kingsley, McLoughlin, Kinsella and the other crooked "K's," Bob Furey, Bill Fowler and the rest will prove quite amusing, especially as it represents them as amenable to reform and to be conscience-stricken by Mr. Moody's preaching.—*Brooklyn Times.*

Only a Tramp.

By the author of "Alone," "Eone," "Through the Dark," etc. 212pp. 50 cts.

An exceedingly picturesque story, with a strong and strangely fascinating character, in the person of the adopted daughter, or kidnapped protege, of a Tramp, for its heroine. The lives of royal queens rarely furnished such heroic and beautiful material for romance as the author has here cunningly and ably drawn from the life of this poor little girl-tramp.

Bera;

OR, THE C. AND M. C. RAILROAD.

BY STUART DE LEON. A novel
169pp. 40 cts.

Well learned in his books, and fresh from the schools of many languages, was young Greek Lyle when fate turned his thoughts to love, and chance directed his steps to the Railroad shops of a far-away village in the Northwest. And here—with fantastic blending of the quaint, strange characters who open the streets of frontier towns—the principal action of this well-told story transpires. Its vivid and swiftly-moving scenes are bright and refreshing, like sunlight down the road over which the record runs.

Poor Theophilus;

AND THE CITY OF FIN. BY A
WELL-KNOWN CONTRIBUTOR TO
"PUCK." 99pp. 25 cts.

Cloth extra. 60 cts.

A love story, tenderly touching, with much fact and little fancy; together with an oddly amusing and quaint conceit pertaining to the wonders of the sea, which is only the more interesting for the little fact and much fancy which it contains.

How It Ended.

BY MARIE FLAACKER. 103pp. 25 cts.

A story, with a glow of southern climes and the perfume of orange groves about it. A real gem of a little book, in the inspiring influence which pervades the glowing landscapes and shady nooks of its well-framed pen-pictures; strong in its delicacy, love, and tenderness.

Glenmere.

A STORY OF LOVE *versus* WEALTH.
112pp. 25 cts.

With well defined action, excellent characterization and thoroughly sustained interest, this compact story is attractive in both plot and purpose; and it is withal, forceful with the healthful tone of the great Northwestern country and people, whence its scenes and animation are drawn.

Our Smoking Husbands,
AND WHAT TO DO WITH
THEM. By HARRIET P. FOW-
LER. 47pp.....10c.
This is a bright and suggestive
little sketch, where good hits,
good hints and good common

sense are most agreeably blended
for the reader's entertainment.

The story of "Our Smoking
Husbands" is naively woven about

I. Mrs. Bird, Bride No. 1.

II. Mrs. Everett, Bride No. 2.

III. Mrs. Hammond, Bride No. 3.

The following volumes of the "Satchel Series" were put in press too late to be
indexed in the current edition of this Catalogue.

Ninety Nine Days.


By CLARA R. BUSH, —pp..—c.

A love story, well drawn, and
written with much spirit and
animation. Will have a large
sale.

Spiders and Rice Pudding.

By FRANCES G. STEVENS, —
pp.....25c.

A very pleasing, compact and
pretty story—fascinating and
striking.

 The attention of the TRADE is asked particularly
to the "SATCHEL SERIES" as popular and fast-selling books.

Newsdealers and Railroad agents find them the most
active and the most profitable stock they can handle.

Everybody likes them.

Doing a large business with this Series, and printing in
very large quantities, we are prepared to make EXTRA-
SPECIAL DISCOUNTS on these books when ordered in quan-
tities.

'Twixt Wave and Sky.

A Novel. By Miss FRANCES E. WADLEIGH. Large
square 12mo, cloth extra, ink and gold, 261pp. \$1.25

This is a story of strong plot and rapid action, with a
thoroughly natural and clever set of characters. The situations
are exciting and novel without being sensational. The narra-
tive is put in a curiosity-exciting form; the spirit and purpose
are noble and pure throughout, and the climax is highly roman-
tic.

In all respects and parts it is a story of very marked ability,
and fully entitles the accomplished author to an immediate and
distinguished rank among the ablest American writers of
fiction.

NEW BOOKS AND NEW EDITIONS

JUST ISSUED BY

THE AUTHORS' PUBLISHING COMPANY,

27 Bond Street, New York.

MISCELLANEOUS.

- Analytical Processes; or, the Primary Principle of Philosophy.** By Rev WM L GILL, A. M.\$2.00
- Beauty of the King.** A brief Life of Christ. By Rev. A. H. HOLLOWAY, A.M., \$1.00; full gilt,\$1.25
- Christian Conception and Experience.** By Rev. WM. I. GILL, A.M.\$1.00
- Ecclesiology: Fundamental Idea and Constitution of the New-Testament Church.** By E. J. FISH, D.D.\$2.00
- Evolution and Progress.** An Exposition and Defence. By Rev. WM. I. GILL, A.M.\$1.50
- Life Among the Clergy.** By Rev. ROBERT FISHER.\$1.25
- Life for a Look.** By Rev. A. H. HOLLOWAY.15 cents.
- Complete Scientific Grammar of the English Language.** By REV. PROF. W. COLEGROVE \$1.25
- Roman Catholicism in the United States.** \$1.25
- Scrap Books—How to Make Them.** By E. W. GURLEY 40c.
- Resurrection of the Body.** Does the Bible Teach it? By E. NISBET, D D. \$1.00
- Universe of Language.** By late GEO. WATSON. Edited by E. H. WATSON. \$1.50
- Spiritual Communications, from the Eternal World.** Edited by HENRY KIDDLE, A. M.\$1.50
- Is our Republic a Failure?** A Discussion of Rights and Wrongs of North and South. By E. H. WATSON.\$1.50
- Camping in Colorado.** With Suggestions to Gold-Seekers, Tourists and Invalids. By S. A. GORDON.\$1.00
- Manuscript Paper.** Per ream, \$1.00 or \$1.25. By mail, 50c. per ream extra.
- Manuscript Manual.** How to Prepare Manuscripts for the Press.10 cents.
- Mercantile Prices and Profits.** By M. R. PILON. (*In press.*)
- Race for Wealth.** Considered in a Series of Letters written to each other by a Brother and Sister. Edited by JAMES CORLEY50 cents.
- What is Demonetization of Gold and Silver?** By M. R. PILON.75 cents.

FICTION AND ÆSTHETICS.

- Buccaneers, The.** Historical Novel. By RANDOLPH JONES. Paper, \$1; cloth \$1.50
- Deacon Cranky, the Old Sinner.** By Geo. Guirey\$1 50
- Cothurnus and Lyre.** By E. J. HARDING\$1.00
- Her Waiting Heart.** By LOUISE CAPSADELL\$1.00
- In Dead Earnest.** By JULIA BRICKINRIDGE\$1.25
- Irene.** By Mrs. B. F. BAER.\$1.00
- Linda; or, Uber das Meer.** By Mrs. H. L. CRAWFORD. For Young Folks \$1.25
- Mystic Key.** A Poetic Fortune Teller 75c
- Our Wedding Gifts.** By AMANDA M. DOUGLAS. Paper, 50 cents; cloth. \$1.00
- Shadowed Perils.** By M. A. AVERY \$1.00
- Sumners' Poems.** By S. B. and C. A. SUMNER. Illustrated. 12mo. \$2 50; 8vo. \$4.00
- Hammock Stories.**\$1.25
- 'Twixt Wave and Sky.** By F. E. WADLEIGH\$1 25
- Wild Flowers.** By C. W. HUBNER..\$1.00

THE ENCHANTED LIBRARY.

- Queer Little Wooden Captain.** By SYDNEY DAYRE 90c.
- Harry Ascott Abroad.** By MATTHEW WHITE, Jr.60c.

THE SATCHEL SERIES.

- How to be Beautiful,** Cl. 75c.; paper 25c.
- Appeal to Moody.** 10c.
- The Traveler's Grab-Bag.** 25c.
- Prisons Without Walls.** 25c.
- Bonny Eagle.** 25c.
- A Story of the Strike.** 30c.
- Lily's Lover.** 35c.
- Rosamond Howard,** Cloth 60c. 25c.
- Voice of a Shell.** 40c.
- Nobody's Business.** 30c.
- Our Winter Eden.** 30c.
- Our Peggotties.** 25c.
- Only a Tramp.** 50c.
- Who Did It.** 30c.
- Poor Theophilus,** Cloth 60c. 25c.
- How it Ended.** 25c.
- Bera; or, C. & M. C. Railroad.** 40c.
- Glenmere.** 25c.
- Spiders and Rice Pudding.** 25c.
- Ninety Nine Days.** 35c.
- Vic.** 30c.

. Books mailed, postpaid, to any part of the United States and Canada, upon receipt of price by the publishers.

New Plan of Publishing and Descriptive Catalogue mailed free.

No. 21.

Each Volume Complete.

THE SATCHEL SERIES.

COMPRISING

Story, Romance, Travel, Adventure, Humor, Pleasure.

—BY—

POPULAR AMERICAN AUTHORS.

Handy little volumes.—*Philadelphia Record*.

Bright things by American authors.—*Whig, Quincy, Ill.*

Instructive as well as agreeable.—*New Bedford Standard*.

Not of the trashy dime novel class.—*Glens Falls Messenger*.

Really of a lively and spicy character.—*American Monthly Magazine*.

Gotten up in a fresh style and printed in plain type.—*Pittsburg Leader*.

Cheap, convenient, and by popular authors.—*Epis. Methodist, Baltimore*.

Bright and breezy, and above all, pure in sentiment.—*Boston Transcript*.

They deserve well of the reading public.—*Illustrated Christian Weekly*.

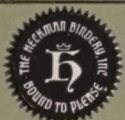
Acknowledged by all to be bright, elegant and charming. There is nothing trashy about them.—*Journal, Somerville, Mass.*

Bright and brief—just the books to read in the cars, at the seashore, or during leisure hours at home.—*Chronicle, Farmington, Me.*

The brightest and best brief works by American authors who are well known to the reading public. They have proved very popular, particularly as summer travelling companions.—*Boston Home Journal*.

Complete in themselves, and interesting. They fill a void, for heretofore cheap literature has been of the flashy and sensational kind, injurious not only to the readers, but to the whole community, because of its effect. A pleasing feature of the volumes issued by the AUTHORS' PUBLISHING COMPANY is that, while they are not dry or insipid, they have a moral tone and effect.—*Fall River Herald*.





JUNE 69

N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00012773754

